Dudley
CHRONICLE

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Council eases street controls after traders object

U-TURN OVER DELIVERY BAN

Report by Richard Guttridge

DUDLEY Council has backed down over a controversial plan to ban deliveries in Pensnett High Street after it prompted a backlash from businesses.

A traffic order stopping lorries and vans from stopping on High Street was due to come into force as part of a multi-million scheme to improve traffic flow along the busy route on the western side of the borough.

But traders feared the move could have had a major impact on their businesses and launched an objection against the ban. Dudley Council has now agreed to only stop loading during peak times in mornings and afternoons.

Pensnett High Street

Roads bosses had wanted to keep High Street clear of obstructions as part of its year-long improvement scheme, which has seen the highway widened and new traffic lights installed. They have been forced to make a U-turn on the plans to stop loading between 7am and 7pm on weekdays due to opposition from business owners, who submitted a petition signed by 42 people.

Revised

Under revised proposals loading will now only be banned between 7.30am and 9.30am and 4pm and 6.30pm in a bid to avoid rush-hour congestion.

A report to the council said: "Business owners on High Street raised concerns about potentially losing trade and expressed a real need for a loading bay for deliveries and customers."

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, boss of environmental services, said the authority had listened to traders. She added: "The Pensnett improvement scheme is progressing well and we are grateful to everyone for bearing with us during this important work. We have listened to local traders and residents throughout this work and have acted on the feedback."

WORKS STARTS ON TRIBUTE TO BRITISH 'SCHINDLER'

The statue of Frank Foley sees him sitting on a bench in the park, which is near his former home, right, hero Frank Foley

WORK has started on a statue honouring a hero dubbed the 'British Schindler'.

Artist Andy de Comyn has begun modelling the statue of Frank Foley, who repeatedly risked his life to save thousands of Jews in Nazi Germany.

Major Foley, who retired to Stourbridge and is buried in the town, worked at the British Embassy in Berlin before the Second World War. He provided thousands of Jewish families with the documents they needed to escape Germany during the 1930s by bending the rules when stamping passports or issuing visas. He also hid Jews in his own home and even went into Sachsenhausen concentration camp with visas to enable prisoners to leave.

The memorial to Major Foley will be in Mary Stevens Park, close to his former home in Eveson Road and the cemetery where he is buried. It is due to be unveiled in June.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin led the campaign for a permanent tribute, persuading then Chancellor George Osborne to stump up £40,000 to cover the costs.

Mr Austin said: "I am absolutely delighted that work has started and the statue should be ready next summer so people can learn about him and our country's role in fighting for freedom, democracy and tolerance against Nazi Germany."

HEALTH

Hospital failings over infections

STAFF at Russells Hall Hospital failed to take sufficient action to prevent the spread of infections on wards, an investigation has found.

NHS experts flagged up 'serious failings' with 'basic infection prevention practices' and said staff did not know what to do to prevent the spread of infections.

Infection control practices were scrutinised during an inspection at the hospital by NHS Improvement.

The Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs Russells Hall, has been given a red RAG rating for infection control, meaning urgent action should be taken, and chiefs have been told staff must receive training annually rather than the recommended every three years.

A ward had to be closed in October following a norovirus outbreak at the Dudley hospital. Thirty six patients were written to earlier this year amid fears tuberculosis could have spread from a patient.

Dudley Group NHS Trust chief executive Diane Wake said: "We invited NHS Improvement to visit us to give us an objective view of our infection prevention and control procedures. It was disappointing that they found some areas where we could do better and we are working hard to make improvements."

ATTACK

Police appeal after boy stabbed in arm

POLICE are appealing for information after a teenager was stabbed in Stourbridge.

West Midlands Police say they received a 999 call from a member of the public reporting a group of up to 20 schoolchildren outside the Mercedes dealership in St Johns Road, Stourbridge, at around 3.15pm on Friday.

A boy, believed to be 14-years-old, suffered a cut to his arm which was bandaged by a member of the public. The boy was taken to hospital for treatment but is not understood to be seriously hurt.

Anyone who saw the incident or has information is asked to call police on 101.

INSIDE
THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN

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Transit camp could be in use by May

Land is often occupied

A TEMPORARY travellers transit site will be set up in the borough within months, say bosses at Dudley Council.

The local authority has said it is 'committed' to trying to provide a transit site by May or June next year.

It comes as protesters said the controversial plans for the favourite potential site in Budden Road, Coseley, should be scrapped over contamination fears, see story below.

Coseley East ward councillor Melvyn Mottram said: "It's got to be discussed with the residents, that seems to me like they have already made their mind up.

"If they're doing it that quick that means they have already made their mind up, no matter what the local councillors and the residents want to discuss with them and that doesn't surprise me."

The council report follows a meeting of the cabinet last week where it was acknowledged that the Budden Road spot favoured for the transit site.

The council's pre-meeting papers state: "Based upon the estimated cost of provision and the saving that can be achieved as a result of the reduction in the number of incursions likely to be experienced, together with the cost of impact on other services, it is likely that all 'up front' costs will be covered within two-to-three years. The council has committed to try to provide a transit site by May/June 2018 when the main 'body' of incursions tends to begin."

Council leader Patrick Harley, at a meeting of the cabinet, said: "It is about providing a response to the problem that we have, when we're spending approximately £150,000 a year to clean the mess that some of the groups leave behind."

It will next be discussed on Monday.

Travellers site is on 'contaminated' land

CONTROVERSIAL plans for a travellers' transit camp in Coseley should be ditched because the land is contaminated, says local councillors.

The Dudley Council-owned land in Budden Road is the favoured spot for travellers to be moved to, as part of new measures to end illegal occupations faster.

The Coseley site has been described as the most favoured in a shortlist of sites, which also include several others in Coseley and Lye. Those against the plan warn that the Budden Road site could pose a health hazard to traveller families as it has been recorded as containing foundry and construction waste.

Coseley East's Councillor Susan Ridney said: "If we're not prepared to even put a football pitch on there how can we put caravans with babies and children on there. This is contaminated land, whatever your views about traveller families, it's wrong to put them on there."

Melvyn Mottram

She added: "We need houses rather than the travellers site.If they're going to put money into cleaning that site up now, lets clean it up and put housing on it."

Coseley councillor Melvyn Mottram said: "We know that there has go to be somewhere for travellers, we can understand the benefits of that but at the end of the day that land is highly contaminated.."

Ten possible locations for the proposed travellers' site also include Blowers Green Road in Dudley, Delph Lane in Withymoor, and The Straits, Gornal.

Council leader Patrick Harley said: "This is not about spending taxpayers money to provide safe havens for travellers to come and visit Dudley. A transit site is there as a deterrent to try and prevent these groups from having illegal encampments.

Big freeze fails to stop lights event

MP Mike Wood, Mayor of Dudley Dave Tyler, Melanie Dunn and Ellis Heathcock push the button

MORE than 100 people braved the sub-zero temperature to witness the Christmas lights being switched on at Brierley Hill.

The official honours were shared between Dudley South MP Mike Wood, Dudley Mayor, Councillor Dave Tyler, and competition winner Melanie Dunne.

A big cheer greeted the sight of the 15ft fir tree on Saturday when it was suddenly lit up by white fairy lights.

The crowd of around 150 peopleat the Moor Centre had been entertained by fire-eaters and fun-fair rides in the build-up to the big switch-on.

Competition winner Melanie came top in a game set up by the council who published photographs of elves in various locations around the town, inviting people to guess where they were.

She took her nephew Ellis Heathcock to join her in switching on the lights.

Faith leaders oppose new boundary to 'split' town

FAITH leaders in Dudley are united in calling for a stop to boundary proposals that would split the town centre in half.

St Thomas ward would be reassigned to a new Sandwell constituency, unnder the Boundary Commissions proposals.

This means ward which covers areas including Kates Hill, Buffery, Sledmere, Blowers Green and Oakham, would not longer be represented by a Dudley MP. It would instead be part of a Sandwell focusses area stretching from Dudley to Edgbaston. It would also see Dudley's historic town centre church of St Thomas's in a different constituency from the ward that carries its name.

Christian, Muslem and Sikh faith leaders have objected.

Rev Robert Barlow, Rector of Dudley, said: "The church has been changing its structures to make cooperation across the borough much easier, so these so these plans couldn't come at the worst possible time."

Palvinder Bains from The Guru Nanak Singh Sabha Gurdwara said: "We are appalled that these proposals clearly do not take in to consideration the needs of residents." Mr Mohammed Aurangzeb, chairman of Dudley Central Mosque, said: "I am really concerned that members of our community could have to travel all the way to the edge of Birmingham to see their 'local' MP."

Keys are handed over for centre

A LONG-AWAITED community centre in Dudley is nearing its official opening.

The North Priory Community Centre is being built beside Donkey Pool playing fields, off Priory Road. It was set to open in May but there was a set back due to funding for building work.

Councillor Ken Finch, who represents the Castle and Priory ward, said: "It has been frustrating because it should have been open by now. But the committee are now in the process of dealing with admin' and sponsors and the keys have been given to us.

"We are not there yet but it should be up and running with an official opening within the next few weeks."

Donations of furniture were offered by Dudley College and Dudley Council earlier this year.

New branch of WI

A NEW branch of the Women's Institute has been formed in Gornal, called the Black Country Wenches WI. It will meet on the second Thursday each month at Zoar Methodist Church, Bank Road, Lower Gornal, at 7pm. Call 07704 729282 or 07760 315346.

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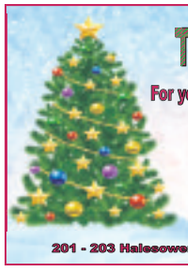
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Hospital is still failing to hit the A&E target

RUSSELLS Hall Hospital is still failing to meet Accident & Emergency waiting time targets – but is not performing as badly as other hospitals in the region.

One in 10 patients were kept waiting longer than four hours to be seen at the Dudley hospital during October, as 90.1 per cent were seen on time.

It means the Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, is still failing to meet the national 95 per cent target that has been set by the Government.

But its A&E performance is better than NHS trusts in Sandwell, Walsall and Staffordshire.

All Black Country NHS trusts are falling short of the Government target in latest figures, which have been released looking at the percentage of people seen within four hours

City

While the University Hospitals of North Midlands, which runs County Hospital in Stafford and Royal Stoke in north Staffordshire, was ranked the third worst in the country.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs Sandwell General Hospital and City Hospital, hit 85.4 per cent, down from 87.9 per cent in September. Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, which runs Walsall Manor Hospital, is 82.8 per cent, up from 81.8.

10 burglary and break-in arrests

TEN burglary suspects have been arrested by West Midlands Police as part of a weekend crime crackdown across the region.

The suspects, aged between 15 and 41 years old, have been taken into custody for offences ranging from a school break-in to a house burglary.

Officers arrested two men aged 18 and 26 on suspicion of stealing TVs from a house in Stourbridge Road, Dudley.

A 36-year-old man was also arrested on suspicion of taking meat from Farm Foods, Wednesbury.

Five youths, aged from 15 to 17, were arrested during the early hours of Monday morning following reports of a burglary at Rosslyn School, Hall Green.

Showaddy show

ROCK and roll stars Showaddywaddy will perform in Brierley Hill next year. They will play their 1970s hits at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on May 5 from 8pm. Tickets £20, see bhillcivic.co.uk.

Hall is safe in our hands, says councillor

Historic Himley Hall will not be sold

HIMLEY Hall will not be sold off, a boss at owners Dudley Council promises, and he has labelled the 18th century hall as a 'jewel in the crown' of the borough.

The cash-strapped authority recently revealed plans to sell off some of its assets to raise funds but the hall is a listed building and also brings in money as the borough's most prestigious public venue.

The authority said last month that the estate's 'wide range of buildings and green spaces' would be 'looked at''. The sprawling estate on the borough border with South Staffordshire includes the Great Pool, a nine-hole golf course, cafe and car park all set in 180 acres of 'Capability' Brown landscape and woodland. There are various outbuildings.

Dudley's regeneration boss Councillor Ian Kettle has moved to allay any fears the hall could be sold. Instead the council would looking at how it could make more money from the landmark, former home to the Earls of Dudley, which hosts weddings and conferences. The hall's grounds host the annual fireworks spectacular, Armed Forces Day, and other events.

Councillor Kettle said: "The new corporate estate strategy is much more than just a cost-cutting exercise. It is true that we will be looking at possible ways of reducing our costs. But the review will also – this is very important when we are talking about Himley Hall – look at ways of maximising the potential of our assets.

"It is already a very popular venue for weddings and conferences. Coupled with its undoubted historical value, that very much makes it a jewel in the crown for this authority. "

Winter weather makes it snow go across borough

THE heavy snowfall at the weekend brought early festive cheer to thousands of youngsters, especially when they got a day off school on Monday.

It was less fun for the commuters who had to make perilous homeward journeys on Friday or those who had to dig themselves out for a slip-sliding journey to work on Monday morning.

The winter wonderland meant cancellations and chaos for many, with bus and train services severely restricted, but the consolation was enjoyed by many families going sledging and snowman-making in the Arctic conditions.

Many of the regions attractions remained closed over the weekend and into the start of the week.

Volunteers at Severn Valley Railway slept at the stations overnight to clear platforms and de-ice the rails but were still forced to cancel all Sunday's Santa Steam Specials due to the continuing snowfall. Those booked on services will be contacted.

Dudley Zoo, which closed on Friday, remained shut over the weekend, citing the welfare of their animals and the health and safety of staff and visitors. Refunds and alternative dates are available.

The site may have been closed but it was business as usual for zoo keepers who had to transport supplies across the 40-acre grounds. Some used sledges to help move food around the Castle Hill site to care for the 1,600 animals.

Jog

The Black Country Living Museum closed on Sunday and the museum was contacting those who had booked for the Santa Hunt.

The Santa Jog that was due to be held in Mary Stevens Park in aid of the hospice on Sunday had to be called off but has been rescheduled for Sunday.

Wolverhampton Grand were quick to tweet their decision to call off both Sunday matinee and evening performances of Jack and The Beanstalk hours after opening the run on Saturday night.

Veteran comedian Sir Ken Dodd's performance at the Wulfrun Hall was also postponed but the 90-year-old's show has been re-arranged for December 21. Contact the venue for further details.

Families were advised to check individual school websites for opening updates.

Santa's on his way – the reindeer at Dudley Zoo were cared for but the zoo was closed to the public

Snow one around – Stourbridge town centre

Narnia? No, Dudley in the snow last weekend

NEWS IN BRIEF

Twice the value in town calendar

A TWO-YEAR calendar featuring paintings and photographs of Dudley has gone on sale.

Proceeds from the 2018/2019 calendar will go to the Mayor of Dudley Councillor Dave Tyler's chosen charities – Dudley Mind, Dudley Alzheimer's Society and the Black Country branch of the YMCA.

It has been put together by mayoral ambassador Sue Randle and features paintings from Black Country artist Graham Colbourne and photographs from students at Dudley College.

Call Sue Randle on 07412 531924 or email suzylimesrdc@hotmail.co.uk to order a copy of the £10 calendar.

Football legend inspires thesis

A DESCENDANT of football icon Duncan Edwards has been awarded a PhD after conducting a seven-year study into her famous relative.

Gayle Rogers did not have to look too far for her subject of her thesis, investigating how Edwards had been commemorated since his death following the 1958 Munich Air Disaster.

Gayle, 49, who like Edwards grew up in Dudley, under took seven years of research which incuded interviews with fans and family. She received her PhD from the University of Central Lancashire in Preston on December 5.

Switch apparently switched for Daz

A MOTHER from Dudley was left shocked after ordering a £300 games console for her son on Cyber Monday – only to receive a box of washing powder instead. Paediatric nurse Charlotte Moore, 30, says she ordered the Nintendo Switch for £301.99 as her six-year-old son's Christmas present. When the parcel arrived the mother-of-two thought she better check and found it contained a £4 box of Daz washing powder. It looked as if the parcel had been tampered with then resealed. Amazon said it would be replaced.

Thieves don't quit during festive season

RESIDENTS across Dudley borough have been urged to be vigilant to stay safe from bogus callers and from burglars over the festive season.

Dudley Council partnership service Living Well, Feeling Safe is highlighting the risks. Police have encouraged people to lock both their front and back doors, even when at home, use a door chain and always ask for identification. Don't leave valuables on show – including presents.

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COUNTY NEWS

Willard to receive honorary degree

MICRO-SCULPTOR Willard Wigan will receive an honorary degree from the University of Warwick, it has been announced.

Willard will be made an Honorary Doctor of Letters by the university next year. The micro-artist, from Wolverhampton, crafts the world's smallest works of art and has been recognised in the Guinness Book of World Records. His works include miniature versions of athlete Usain Bolt and cartoon characters Pinocchio and Cinderella. The sculptor, who will receive the degree at a ceremony in January, was awarded an MBE for services to art in 2007.

Comic comes out to visit exhibit

BRUMMIE comic and rising TV star Joe Lycett has spoken of his pride at a new exhibition opening in his home city looking at the past five decades of sexuality. The ground-breaking 'Coming Out' exhibition marks the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of male homosexual acts in England and Wales.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery will feature works by celebrated artists including Andy Warhol, Francis Bacon and Grayson Perry. Lycett, who has appeared on shows including Live at the Apollo, Never Mind the Buzzcocks and 8 Out of 10 Cats, made a guest appearance at the launch.

Students join business group

SEVEN students from the Black Country have joined the 2017/2018 cohort of the Lloyds Bank Social Entrepreneurs Programme. The year-long programme offers financial support towards a social business to help solve some of the most pressing issues.

They include Lianne Cargill from Oldbury, Clive Corbett of Kingswinford, Omar Campbell of Walsall, Mandeep Singh, Chloe Dennis-Green, Gurinder Basson, all Wolverhampton and Lorna Phillip of Birmingham.

Samosa wins Indian food firm gold award

A GREAT Barr-based Indian food firm, co-founded by an Aston University student, has won a gold award for its vegetable samosa.

Sisters Geeta, 30, and Reena Salhan, 24, received the award in the 'food manufactured for food service' category for their business Green Sisters in the FreeFrom Eating Out Awards – who promote excellence in 'free from' food outlets for people with special diets.

Trolley good effort by former Goodyear staff

Celebrating a Good-year effort – trolley loads of food bought by former Goodyear workers at Blakemore Wholesale Unit, in Wolverhampton

FORMER Goodyear workers have been spreading some festive cheer by handing over a massive donation of £2,000 worth of food and toiletries to our Feed a Family This Christmas appeal.

This incredibly generous gift of more than 2,500 items will go towards helping families and individuals in need across the Black Country.

Trolleys were loaded with everything from tins of vegetables, noodle pots and pasta to bottles of squash, long-life milk and jars of coffee. There was also an array of sweet treats including chocolate selection boxes for youngsters and vital toiletries including toothbrushes, shampoo and deodorant.

Families with babies were also included with much-needed donations of nappies and wipes among the items donated by the Goodyear workers 5/344 Transport and General Workers Union Benevolent Fund. Bosses at Blakemore Wholesale in Wolverhampton also helped.

It's almost 12 months since production finished at Goodyear but chairman of the Unite branch Cyril Barrett said workers were still very much committed to helping the community.

Bishop's blessing

Cycling legend Hugh Porter has been backing the appeal

Rug trader Doris Bradbury makes her contribution to the Feed A Family collection point at Anne Franks's pop up charity stall at Cannock market

THE DROP-OFF POINTS:

Express & Star Wolverhampton, 51-53 Queen Street, WV1 1ES; Express & Star Cannock/Walsall office, Queen Square, Cannock WS11 1EA; Oldbury office, Black Country House, Rounds Green Road, Oldbury, B69 2DG.

DONATIONS CAN ALSO BE DROPPED OFF AT:

Waitrose Wolverhampton, Penn Road, WV2 4NJ; The Midcounties Co-operative Food Store Codsall, 28-32 Wood Lane/Bakers Way, Codsall WV8 1DB. Also at the Saddlers Centre in Walsall. Donations dropped off at those will go to The Well.

THE Bishop of Dudley has spoken of the terrible struggles faced by families who are finding it difficult to put food on the table.

The Right Rev Graham Usher says he is aware of one heart-breaking example where a father had to ask his daughter to choose between celebrating her birthday or Christmas.

Thankfully, a food bank came to the rescue so that she could have both a birthday gift and be able to enjoy the festive season. The Bishop shared the story as he donated food towards the Express & Star and Chronicle's Feed a Family This Christmas appeal, which is aiming to help hundreds of families and the vulnerable across the Black Country and Staffordshire. And time is running out for donations, with the appeal finishing on Saturday.

Bishop of Dudley, Graham Usher

He said: "Christmas is for many of us a wonderful time of family gatherings and eating and drinking too much. It is rightly a time of joy and celebration. Amidst the fairy lights and tinsel that surround us there are families trying to live with difficult choices. Hard working families on low incomes who are struggling to make ends meet. Refugees who are confused having fled their homes. Elderly people who are frequently lonely.

"In recent weeks I've heard of women in a local refuge who, having fled domestic violence, applied for Universal Credit and have no money as they await the result."

The Bishop asked others to join him in supporting the Feed a Family appeal, joining a host of other notable Midlanders including Wolverhampton cycling legend Hugh Porter, who has also backed the appeal

We are asking for gifts of festive food, such as mince pies, chocolates and Christmas puddings, as well as basics like canned goods, long-life milk, fruit juice, pasta and rice.

Non-food items such as toiletries, baby supplies, new socks and small presents are also welcome during the appeal.

Meanwhile, generous members of the public have donated to Cannock market, at trader Anne Franks's pop-up stall.

Anne sells a variety of items each week for a different charity and has used this month to support the Feed A Family campaign. Customers and fellow traders have also given cat and dog food to ensure pets don't go without either. Anne said: "Everyone has been very kind."

Junction 10 works will mean delays for 2 years

DRIVERS will face nearly two years of delays during the major revamp of the M6 junction 10, council chiefs have revealed.

The £65 million project to reduce congestion, which will see the two main bridges replaced and surrounding roads widened to increase capacity, could start as early as next winter.

But bosses have now revealed it will take around 98 weeks from start to finish, causing chaos for drivers using the route near Walsall and Wolverhampton. It will also mean more misery for Midlands motorway commuters, who currently face delays on the M5 close to the link with the M6.

Walsall Council's cabinet met on Wednesday to authorise officers to contact landowners about plots which will need to be acquired to expand the junction.

The council needs to take on two acres of land permanently and a further 2.5 acres temporarily.

But they will also need to create a temporary construction compound which will either be based at John Hill & Sons scrapyard off the Wolverhampton Road, or the industrial estate of Bloxwich Lane.

Councillor Angela Underhill, who represents Bentley and Darlaston North which contains the junction, hoped the disruption would be worth it in the long-term.

She said: "I am dreading the next couple of years but at least I know it is going to end."

New secondary school on hold

A NEW secondary school which will open in Blakenall has been pushed back by 12 months.

The Windsor Academy Trust, which will run the 1,150 free school, has now confirmed it will be called Swift Academy whilst stating that it will welcome its first students in September 2019 and not September next year has was originally hoped.

A consultation launched in November on the project and will run until January 22.

A site is yet to be agreed and the trust confirmed that is why the opening has been delayed.

Keith Sorrell, the chief executive officer of the trust, said: "We believe – and local parents tell us – that there is a clear need for more secondary provision in the Blakenall area of Walsall.

"It is hugely encouraging the see the number of really positive responses to our consultation."

Visit swiftacademy.org.uk for more information on Swift Academy.

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Merry Hill owner intu is bought in £3.4bn deal

SHOPPING centres group Hammerson is to take over rival intu, owner of the Merry Hill shops complex at Brierley Hill, in a £3.4 billion deal that will create Britain's biggest property company.

The boards of Hammerson, which already owns The Bullring and Grand Central in Birmingham, and intu, which also owns Lakeside in Essex and Manchester's Trafford Centre, have agreed the offer by Hammerson to buy all intu shares.

Hammerson is also leading development of a new shopping complex on a 12-acre former foundry site on Bromford Road in Oldbury.

The deal will create a £21bn shopping centres giant.

The offer represents a value of approximately 253.9p per intu share, equivalent to £3.4bn.

The combined group, which will be called Hammerson, will be led by Hammerson boss David Atkins and chaired by David Tyler. John Whittaker, deputy chairman of intu, will become deputy chairman of the enlarged group and John Strachan, chairman of intu, will join the board as senior independent director.

The group overall will have six directors nominated by Hammerson and four directors nominated by Intu. Hammerson will continue to use the intu consumer brand within its shopping centre portfolio.

Man shot in raid by masked gang

MASKED robbers shot one man and hit another over the head during a raid in Dudley last week.

West Midlands Police launched an investigation after the break-in on Tuesday afternoon (December 5).

A police spokesman said a gang wearing masks are believed to have forced their way into a property on Cromwell Street, Kates Hill, just before 3pm. Inside, one man was shot and another was struck over the head.

Both were taken to hospital with injuries that were not thought to be life threatening.

Police said it was believed to have been a targeted attack and police enquiries to trace the raiders were continuing.

Anyone with information call 101.

Christmas past

A FESTIVE exhibition looking at Christmases past is being held at Dudley Archives and Local History Centre, Tipton Road, until the end of December. It features photographs and memorabilia. Free entry.

Assurance over turnover of health chiefs

Chief executive Diane Wake

FOUR out of five senior health bosses at Russells Hall Hospital have left their posts this year with the fifth leaving this month.

The turnover of staff at the top of Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the hospital, resulted in questions being raised by Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group.

Both the hospital and CCG insisted the departures would not impact on patients and a new team was in place after the CCG, which oversees health care in the borough, demanded assurances from the trust.

A number of high ranking NHS staff left after new chief executive Diane Wake took over the running of Russells Hall from Paula Clark in April.

Interim medical director Julian Hobbs replaced Paul Harrison in October. Mr Harrison is also no longer deputy chief executive. Michael Woods was appointed interim chief operating officer, replacing Paul Bytheway, who left in September. Mr Woods will be replaced by Karen Kelly, who will take the permanent role in January.

Siobhan Jordan took over as chief nurse from Dawn Wardell in March, getting the job permanently in October. The current director of finance, Paul Taylor, leaves at the end of this month. Chris Walker, current deputy director finance, will take over on an interim basis.

Ms Wake said it had been a 'period of change' but she added: "We are fortunate that all our new board members have benefitted from comprehensive hand-overs with their predecessors or long-standing deputies, who have significant organisational and local knowledge.

"Our priority has continued to be quality patient care and safety."

Power supply problems hit major foundry firm

A MAJOR foundry business may be forced to move after being told it should fork out £1.4 million to pay for an improved electricity supply.

Thomas Dudley and other companies in Dudley borough have experienced power supply problems, which have led the Black Country Chamber of Commerce to campaign for improved infrastructure.

Chamber chief executive Corin Crane said that energy supply was becoming a big issue for local businesses and would form part of its Making the Future campaign.

He explained that many firms had reported problems with power outages, reliability and a reluctance from energy companies to invest in improving infrastructure.

"We will be approaching the Government directly about the problems and the price difference being faced by our businesses and their European competitors," he said.

Martin Dudley, chairman and chief executive of the castings firm, said: "The high cost of power in the UK against Europe is a big problem. A lot of countries have subsidised power, which is a disadvantage to us."

Constraint

He said his company had invested more than £10m to upgrade its site and foundry, including £3m on its new offices at the Birmingham New Road site.

He added: "We are now finding a constraint on the amount of product that we can produce because we can't get enough power to the site.

"Our network provider is telling us we are at full capacity and we have to spend £1.4m to upgrade infrastructure in the local area.

"We don't think we should be both buying electricity and paying for infrastructure to be improved as well."

Western Power Distribution (WPD) corporate communications officer Michael Clarke said the new furnace meant that Thomas Dudley exceeded their agreed supply capacity.

He added that WPD were investing £133,000 to replace cable in the local area to improve the reliability of electricity supply.

Golf day tees up cash for charities

Beacon's Donna Gordon with the society's Lee Judson and, right, Simon Cater, of Compton Hospice

AN annual charity golf day raised £3,080 for worthwhile causes. The key date in the Tipton and Coseley Building Society's fundraising calendar was well supported with 15 teams competing.

The Tipton's Charitable Foundation also contributed £2,500 to the fundraising coffers, meaning Beacon Centre in Sedgley and Compton Hospice in Tettenhall each received £2,790.

Donna Gordon, partnership development manager at Beacon Centre, said: "We are incredibly grateful to Tipton and Coseley Building Society for raising this money for Beacon." Simon Cater, corporate fundraiser at Compton Hospice, added: "This wonderful donation will enable us to provide 24 visits from a hospice at-home nurse to a patient in their own home."

Lee Judson, from the society, said: "It's always a pleasure to donate cash to these two charities."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bert's tribute team climb again

A BEN Nevis climb in memory of a peace campaigner from Dudley is being held again in August next year.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin and Mayor of Dudley Councillor Dave Tyler will be among those climbing Britain's highest peak in honour of Bert Bissell. He climbed Ben Nevis 107 times and constructed a peace cairn at the summit in 1945.

A group has made an annual trip to the Scottish mountain in his memory since 2014, raising thousands of pounds for borough charities. Next year will mark the 20th anniversary of Mr Bissell's death. Contact steve waltho@hotmail.co.uk for details.

Dress by order of the Peaky Blinders

THERE will be a prize for the best Peaky Blinders outfit at a Dudley hotel's festive event on Saturday.

The Station Hotel on Castle Hill is hosting a Peaky Blinders-era fancy dress night. Tickets are £2 in advance from the hotel reception. The evening will also feature traditional Black Country food and pub games.

Series four of the Birmingham set 1920s gangster drama is currently being screened by the BBC on Wednesdays, after scenes were filmed a short distance away from the hotel at the Black Country Living Museum.

Some parents can get free childcare

PARENTS are being urged to take up the Time for Twos offer in Dudley borough, which gives up to 15 hours free childcare for two-year-olds .

Parents who receive certain benefits, have an income of less than £16,190 per year, or have a child with a disability or special educational needs may be eligible for the free 15 hours during term time weeks.

The offer of up to 15 hours free childcare each week can be used at a local private nursery, pre-school or with a childminder. Call (01384) 814291 for details.

Santa will be special guest at charity event

A CHRISTMAS charity event in aid of the homeless is taking place in Stourbridge on Saturday.

Leslie's Care Packages will hold the event in St Thomas' Church Hall, Market Street, from 11am to 3pm, including a free Santa's grotto. Those visiting can also expect stalls selling cakes, books, plus a raffle, refreshments and live music. Visitors can also hang a paper bauble in memory of a loved one on the Christmas tree.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Food critic needs to Shed his prejudices

YEARS ago, a long-haired food critic named Jay Rayner gave his verdict on the culinary tastes of Black Country folk. His summary is best described as withering.

He said there was not a single good place to eat in the Black Country "because the local population doesn't want good food." A bit harsh, I thought, but at the time put it down to regional differences in taste. With the proviso, of course, that cosmopolitan liberal London tastes are superior to those of the rest of the country.

What Mr Rayner did not really express, though, was what his precise taste was. He told us he didn't like cow pie from a pub in Netherton, which he said was "not quite the a***hole of the world, but bloody close". But he didn't say what type of food he did like. Well he has now.

Recently he took to Twitter to share his thoughts on an achingly trendy new restaurant in south London called The Shed. He opined: "At last: a restaurant that recognises food is all about mood. Of all the shed-based experiences out there this one sounds like the best."

He added he was very keen to try out a dish called "Contemplation", which looked delightful in the soft-focus pictures on the restaurant's website.

The Shed was, in fact, a wind-up. It was created by a chap called Oobah Butler to highlight the absurdity of the people who rave about supposedly cutting-edge food, and the perils of reading too much into online reviews. "Contemplation", like his other dishes "Empathetic" and "Comfort" were mocked up using such delightful ingredients as shaving foam, household paint, plus a couple of toilet blocks to give it that special je ne sais quoi.

For what it's worth, I think Mr Rayner is wrong. People in the Black Country appreciate good food. It's just that it would take more than a few pretentious words about "mood" to persuade us to eat the contents of the bathroom stool.

That said, if anyone fancies a whip-round to help Mr Rayner achieve his dream of tasting Contemplation, I'd be delighted to chip in.

❒❒❒

IT'S here. It's official. You can always tell when the Christmas celebrations have started in earnest when you get the first reports of the Christmas grottos that don't quite live up the make-believe expectations.

One of the first off the block was the one at Gracechurch Shopping Centre in Sutton Coldfield, where Father Christmas failed to show up because he had been caught in snow. Elf 'n' safety, one presumes.

Yobs now believe that the courts can't harm them

Pamela Stephenson – spoke frankly about her friendship with the royals

Prince Harry – it is said he knew he should wed somebody from showbiz

Christine Keeler – virtually impossible for parents to protect today's children

CCTV holds no fear for all these thugs

THE most chilling CCTV footage of the week shows two thugs on a Tube train in London. They attacked a young man, half-strangled him in a headlock, took his mobile phone and threatened to stab him until he "apologised" for being gay. What made this incident so shocking was not the level of violence, nor even the hatred behind the attack. It was that these thugs must have known their faces would be caught on CCTV, and simply didn't give a damn. Were they out of their skulls on drugs, or made mad by religious fervour? Perhaps it's more likely that they are part of that vast feral army of youths who, having been caught and cautioned repeatedly by the police, have come to believe the law cannot harm them. CCTV was supposed to be a deterrent. It is not. The courts are supposed to be a deterrent. They are not. And as you look into the dead-eyed faces of those two yobs on the Tube, you can only pray your paths do not cross with theirs, for the cameras on the wall will not save you and the judges will not give you justice.

THE shop doorways seem fuller than ever with homeless sleepers. This is an existence which depends entirely on the generosity of people with spare cash. But the advent of contactless debit cards coupled with the plans to strip out thousands of high-street cash machines, as announced last week, means we may soon become a cashless society. And what then? "Any spare change, mate?" "No change at all, pal."

I WAS in a shop queue behind a woman who was buying 15 chocolate oranges. "It's the grandchildren," she gushed. "They all want an orange in their stockings." I guess it would be unfestive to point out that, despite the name,

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

a great fatty globe of milk chocolate laced with orange essence is not actually an orange. By way of comparison, an orange contains 87 calories, a chocolate orange about 800.

WE live in an age of entrepreneurs, chancers and wide boys. East of England Co-op has just started selling rice, crisps, pasta and other "dry goods" that have passed their best-before date for just 10p. Are they on eBay at 50p yet?

AND off to our first Xmas meal of the season, one of those events where you have to specify the menu in advance. Seriously, how many of us know, half way through November, whether, on a Sunday in early December, we might fancy chicken pate or prawns? One easy decision was to eliminate broccoli and Stilton soup from the equation. Broccoli and Stilton, for gawd's sake. Doesn't the very thought of it make you heave?

A FRIEND recalls another Stilton experiment that didn't quite work. On the menu in a country pub some years ago, mackerel with Stilton sauce looked strangely tempting. Turned out to be a curious blend of oily fish with that Stilton hint of damp, unwashed sports kit left in the locker all year. Well all I can say to that is Bon appetit.

IF the gossips are to be believed, Prince Harry said he knew he should wed somebody from showbiz just days before he met Meghan Markle. Not because he wanted to meet someone glamorous but because celebrities and royals understand the pleasures and perils of fame and how to deal with them. This rang a bell. Ages ago, I interviewed Pamela Stephenson and she spoke very frankly about her and her husband Billy Connolly's friendship with the royals, notably Prince Charles. There was, she said, a common bond between the Windsors and the Connollys based simply on being famous and coping with the fans. And now she's Lady Connolly.

OUR changing language. Some long-term cannabis users in the States have reported unexplained episodes of screaming and vomiting. The condition has been named "scromiting."

CHRISTINE Keeler has died, aged 75. In the same week a major police operation against online sex stalkers revealed how it is virtually impossible for parents to protect today's children from the depravity of adults. Back in the 1960s, controlling your kids' access to the worldwide media was much simpler. I remember my father getting up early to hide the Daily Express, thus preventing us kids from reading a single juicy word about the Profumo Affair.

THE Great Puffin Conspiracy continues, this time on Blue Planet II (BBC1). It is rife among naturalists and its mantra is: "I can make my puffins look bigger than yours." Using zoom lenses, full-frame images and a lack of any means of comparison, puffins appear to be as big as turkeys. In real life as one wildlife tourism website warns its customers: "They are always smaller than people expect."

TALKING POINT

Why make such a meal over Christmas?

SCROOGE. Killjoy. Grinch. Party-pooper. These are just some of the comments I've had to endure over the years . . . and all because I'm not a fan of Christmas.

It seems just because I can't get carried away with the idea of buying overpriced presents for people who don't really want them, and don't find it easy to enter into the party spirit I'm a mean, curmudgeonly misery who doesn't want anyone to enjoy the festive season.

And yet nothing could be further from the truth. I love to see people looking forward to a fortnight of over-indulgence and slothfulness in the name of merriment. It's just that I don't really get why we all have to be involved.

Just this month, two things highlighted this divide in my eyes. The first was the annual discussion over when and where to have the office "do" and who to invite. Personally, I don't enjoy eating out, except when absolutely necessary. I get exasperated with the rigmarole of perusing the menu, waiting to order, and finally trying to attract someone's attention to get the bill. So that was that. I gave it a miss.

The second reminder was when one of my favourite radio programmes was cut by 15 minutes so the station could promote its Christmas charity appeal. I've got nothing against charity – I regularly send a large donation to my chosen good cause – but again I had the feeling that I was being browbeaten into making a gesture I'm not that wild about.

It set me thinking about a news article in which the idea of loneliness at Christmas was questioned. The report pointed out many people feel more lonely in the summer. It seems with all the activities going on outdoors, and relatives and friends away on holiday, a large proportion of the population living alone might prefer Christmas time, no matter how little attention they receive around now.

So, where does that leave us? My father used to say once the presents had been opened, and the turkey dinner polished off, that was Christmas over and done with for another year. In my view, he was right, especially in view of all the fuss and palaver in the "run-up to the big day" as the advertising industry likes to put it.

To sum up, I'll leave you with one of my favourite observations on Christmas which springs to mind every year. It came from comedy actress Goldie Hawn, who said "Why don't they move Christmas to July when the shops aren't so busy?"

It always make me smile, even though it might provoke a debate for another day. In the meantime, goodwill to you all.

STEVE PARLETT

Boundary changes would rip Dudley apart

HAVING failed to put Halesowen into a constituency with part of Birmingham, the Boundary Commission has now decided to tear apart Dudley leaving only part of the old borough in a constituency bearing its name, and dumping the other parts into constituencies outside the Dudley borough.

Half the town centre and Oakham would be ripped from their historic roots and transplanted into a constituency based around Smethwick. The other half, mostly Netherton, would be absorbed into Halesowen and Rowley Regis constituency.

Woodsetton and half of Old Park, just two miles from the town centre, together with Sedgley and Upper Gornal, would be separated into a constituency with Bilston and Coseley. This piece of mischief would create a constituency, comprising a significant part of Dudley borough, called Wolverhampton South & Coseley.

This would lead to the farcical situation of MPs, representing north and central Dudley, gathering in counting halls in Sandwell and Wolverhampton to hear their election results.

This is just plain wrong.

The only justification for this is to reduce the number of MPs and create similar sized constituencies – a principle selectively ignored in other parts of the country where it would upset the locals. But it's okay to break up the historic communities that make up Dudley, and give them to MPs who will struggle to understand and represent the local interests of its constituents?

Let's tell those fools at the Boundary Commission to back off, go back to the drawing board, and start again.

A A CROMPTON
Dudley

Steps view ruined by a wiggler

MYSELF, my daughter and granddaughter went along to the Arena Birmingham to see the group Steps perform.

Steps gave the performance of their lives. We thoroughly enjoyed it and the supporting act, Vengaboys, were really good also.

The only thing that spoilt it for me was a very selfish young lady sat directly in front of me.

When the music got to her she decided to stand up, wiggling her hips to the music and completely blocking my view of the group. After a while I politely asked her to sit. She wasn't very happy but eventually did so. However, this was repeated several times.

I had paid good money to see the show and wanted to be able to see what was going on. If you want to stand and dance around why not book tickets in the standing area?

MRS JEAN GREENHALL
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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If they can walk that far why the badge?

IN response to the two letters regarding parking opposite Russells Hall Hospital, I would like to add that if someone with a blue badge can walk the distance to the hospital and then round the hospital they probably aren't entitled to a blue badge anyway!

If an able-bodied driver has dropped them off then surely they should have to park in a normal parking space and not in a disabled parking place.

The same goes for shopping centres and supermarkets.

BARBARA BODDISON
Kingswinford

A second referendum is required

BREXIT negotiations continue to reveal facts that should have been revealed during the referendum.

It is becoming obvious that the 'Leave' campaign and the Government had either not thought through the consequences, or deliberately concealed the truth.

Throughout the negotiations the problem of the Irish border has been sidelined, as if it were a secondary item. On the contrary, it is fundamental.

It is now becoming likely that the Irish border may not be a physical border but a border on a map. If that should happen, our borders will be no more secure, possibly more vulnerable. That is not what the majority voted for. The EU will almost certainly support the Irish Republic on this issue. Should this be the case, then the referendum is fatally flawed and we should be allowed a second referendum.

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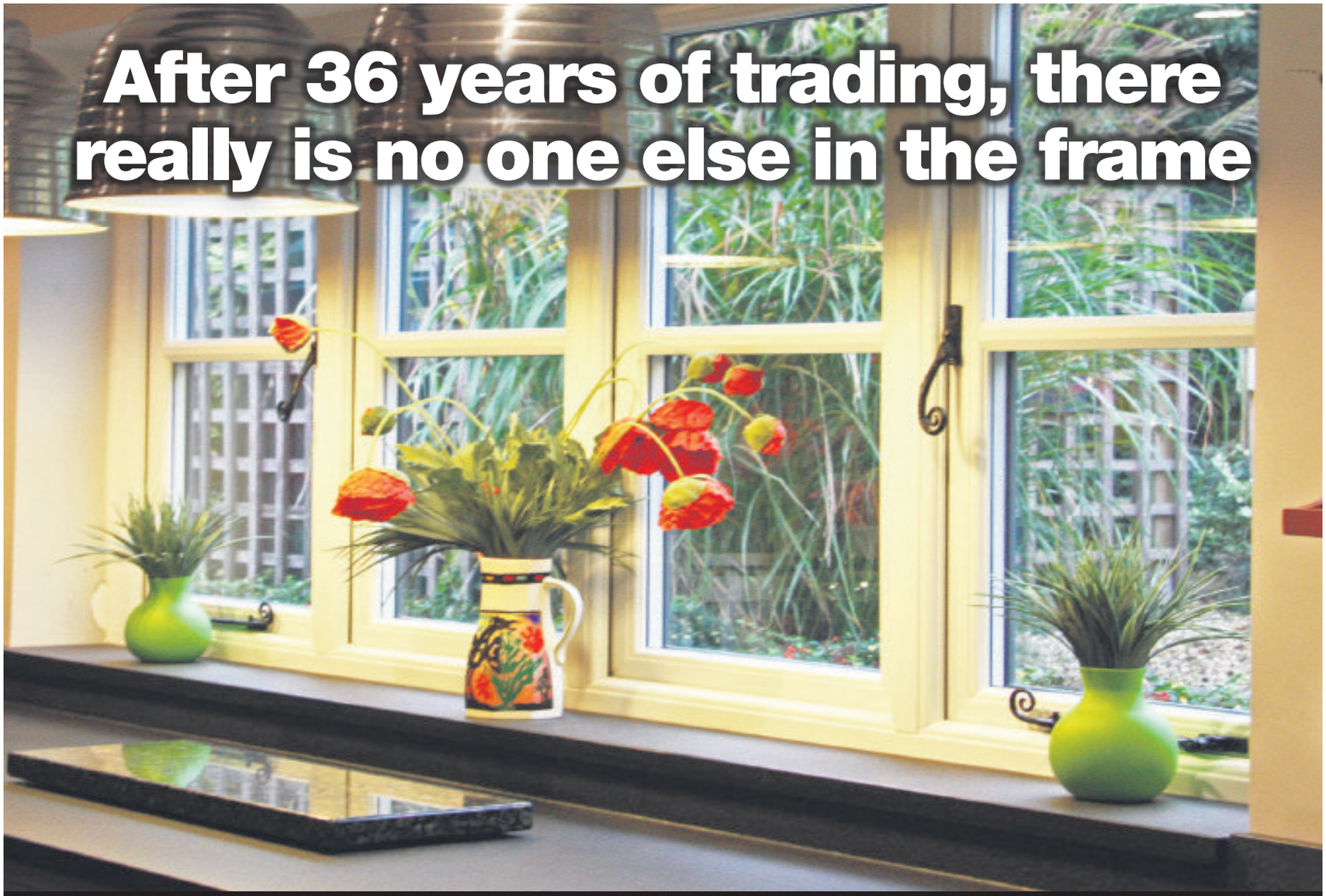

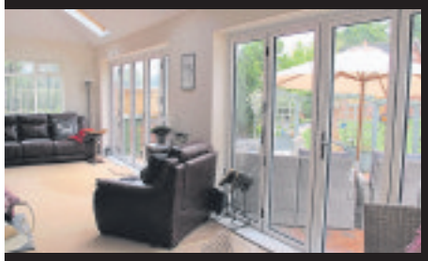

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Let us play! Churches take to the airwaves

Carols and dedications, and a look at the real meaning of Christmas, will feature on Gornal Christmas Radio

A METHODIST minister is taking to the airwaves to provide wall-to-wall festive music with a religious message up to midnight on Christmas Eve

Reverend Kevin Jones is creating a pop-up radio station because he wants to spread the joy of Christmas and the religious message that he feels is sometimes lost.

Gornal Christmas Radio will launch on Saturday and people will be able to tune in on 87.7FM if they live within around five miles of Rev Jones's home in Sedgley..

Rev Jones, who will be presenting the breakfast show himself, said: "Our aim is to share the joy of Christmas but also the religious meaning behind the festival, that Christmas is not just about presents, lights and reindeers."

The station will play carol, dedications and also hopes to bring in members of the community for a chat. The station has been established by five Methodist churches in the Gornal area, costing more than £1,200 to obtain the licence.

MP backs Kindcoats scheme for homeless

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin is working with café bosses to help homeless people stay warm this winter.

Mr Austin and Gather Café in Dudley High Street were launching the scheme on Monday. Kindcoats allows people to donate a coat to those who are sleeping rough.

People simply leave their coats on a rail outside Gather Café and people who need it can then pick it up.

Labour MP Mr Austin said: "Homelessness has shot up in recent years and is not only a problem in Dudley but across the Black Country and the whole of the West Midlands.

Trebled

"The number of people sleeping rough in the West Midlands has more than trebled and now winter is here more needs to be done to support those who have nowhere to live.

"Although I want more to be done to tackle the cause of homelessness, we need to be there to give help to those who find themselves without a home."

By David Cosgrove

"I am sure the generous people of Dudley will get behind the idea. All you need to do is hang the coat on a rail which will be outside of Gather Café on Dudley High Street."

The rail has signs saying "Need one? Take one. Want to help? Leave one". More details are at the www.kindcoats.com website.

Loraine Stockton, director at Gather Dudley, said: "It works alongside our regular support for local people with homeless issues and struggling families."

She added: "Our community is a generous one and we're sure it will be a fantastic asset to the town and its citizens."

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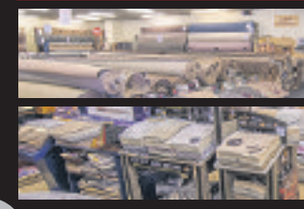

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Sister pays tribute to victim of house fire

Gary Gooding, 42, from Netherton, could not be revived after he was found in his burning house

THE victim of a house fire thought to have been started by a lithium battery has been named as Gary Gooding.

The battery was on charge at the Blackbrook Road property in Netherton when the fire started, say investigators.

Emergency services were called at 6.10am on December 1 to the property where Mr Gooding, aged 42, was helped by firefighters but died at the scene.

His sister Carly Gooding took to Facebook to leave an emotional tribute and to warn others to beware of chargers as a potential fire hazard.

She said: "Our family will never be the same again but if we can save another family having to go through this pain we would like to remind and warn everyone to make sure their smoke alarms are working and also unplug all electricals when they go to bed."

"We can never bring our brother back but we don't want anymore lives lost through this tragic accident."

Hospital is closing to create more home help

A HOSPITAL specialising in mental health treatment will close following a shake-up of services in Dudley.

Birch Day Hospital, on King Street, is being shut to make way for a new mental health service that will see patients treated at home.

The decision has been made by Dudley & Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, which believes the changes will make it easier for patients to get help.

A trust spokesman said: "We are working with patients and families to support them safely through the transition of care."

Careful consideration was taken over the closure, the trust says, and comes after a public consultation.

Assessment

As part of the restructure, patients will be able to seek assessment every day of the week and will also be entitled to three visits a day from a carer.

The service is aimed at older people and has been given the go ahead by Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group.

By Jamie Brassington

The spokesman added: "Patients that require psychological interventions will still be able to access these services and we are exploring options to deliver these closer to home in the community.

"The new service will provide enhanced support for patients including a specialist older adult home treatment service, avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions. Alongside this, assessment for patients in the community will be extended to seven days a week.."

The move will also see money set aside to create new mental health services for patients suffering with dementia, delivered via Dudley Dementia Gateways.

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Smooth run for social enterprise initiative

Amy Kelly, left, and Michelle Davies of Candidate Source with Steven Beckley from Dudley's Lunch On The Run

A SOCIAL enterprise in Dudley is helping to give more people with learning disabilities access to expert training and the chance of employment thanks to the support of a recruitment business.

Candidate Source has raised more than £4,500 as part of its commitment to support Dudley-based Lunch on the Run (LOTR). This has involved a number of fundraising activities, including a sell-out Elvis Tribute night, cake mornings and helping LOTR secure new contracts to provide catering services to corporate clients.

It has also agreed to cover the costs of an additional training place with Steven Beckley currently gaining new skills in his bid to secure a job for the first time in 15 years. Candidate Source has covered his salary for 12 months in paid work at Lunch on the Run, in order to boost his CV.

"When we agreed to support Lunch on the Run we set ourselves the target of generating about £2,500," explained Michelle Davies, managing director. However, when we got to know the social enterprise a little better and saw first-hand the excellent work it does, we knew we needed to up our game."

Lunch on the Run currently supports 17 people, providing training, life skills and important work experience in its catering business and coffee shop in Stafford Street in Dudley.

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Rescued dogs at the shelter in Romania

Stuart Sowden, left, and Paul Morris

At work on the kennels to make them winter-proof

Stuart says hello to the canines they're helping

The open kennels at the shelter in Bacau

Duo work to protect dogs

TWO generous Black Country businessmen have made a return journey to Romania to step in over the suffering of street dogs.

Paul Morris and Stuart Sowden were so moved by the plight of the abandoned and abused dogs dumped on the streets that they offered to carry out vital work at a rescue shelter in Bacau.

Paul who runs Halesowen firm P&R Morson and colleague Stuart have been carrying out repairs at the shelter including a new roof on the kennels. Despite having just flown back they are now planning another trip when they will look at the electrics at the cash-strapped dogs home.

They stepped in having heard about West Midlands-based Sadie's Stray Dog Rescue which has a shelter in Bacau working to rescue abandoned, abused and injured dogs that have been dumped on the streets. Once well enough, the team in the UK helps to find them new homes.

Friend Katie Hughes, from Hagley, adopted a rescue puppy called Nelly from the organisation and decided she wanted to find out more about where her pet had come from so went to Bacau with pal Anna Hughes, from Stourbridge. They posted updates on social media which were seen by dog lovers Paul and Stuart.

Paul, who heads the mechanical and electrical contractors, said they knew then that they wanted to get involved and use their skills to help improve the shelter.

"It felt like the least we could do and we were soon hopping on a plane to Bacau ourselves," he added.

They first visited in October and inspected the shelter, determiniig what best could be achieved in a week and ordered materials.

One of the biggest challenges was the winter weather in Romania which is harsh, reaching -25 in winter, and the kennels are all outside.

Paul and Stuart then returned recently and replaced the roof on around 20 dog pens – 60 metres in length.

ON his return, Paul said: "We do intend on visiting again to continue with the work. This will be when the weather has turned, around Easter time. We intend to continue with the roofing.

"We will look at installing a dedicated water supply and stand pipes along the full length of the shelter."

Before flying out, Paul had said: "This project is definitely going to be a challenge for us and very emotionally draining I'm sure, but we couldn't sit back and do nothing."

His wife Claudia has also been organising a fundraising appeal to buy new kennels.

For more information and to find out how you can get involved visit: www.sadiesstraydogrescue.com or join the Sadie's Stray Dog Rescue group on Facebook.

Directors are in court over waste mountain

A COMPANY director has admitted offences relating to a mountain of waste at a Dudley industrial estate.

Brian McIntosh, aged 27, of Adams Hill, Bartley Green, Birmingham, a director at Mak Waste Ltd, pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court to knowingly causing the contravention of an environmental permit. It relates to a yard once operated by Rowanoak Waste in Shaw Road.

He appeared with Edward Boulton, 42, of Larkspur, Tamworth, also a director at Mak Waste, and Randle Hawkins, 58, of Quarry Bow, Upper Gornal, and Kevin Allan, 58, of Roundway Down, Perton, both directors at Rowanoak.

Boulton denies failing to comply with an environmental permit. Hawkins and Allan had yet to enter pleas. Boulton, Hawkins and Allan are due to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on January 4.

MP Williamson says 'kill British jihadis'

BRITISH jihadis who fight for ISIS should be killed to make sure they never come back to the UK and pose a threat, South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson said.

The Kinver MP, who is the new Defence Secretary, has vowed to eliminate those intent on bringing 'destruction, death and bloodshed' to Britain.

He said: "My view is a dead terrorist can't cause any harm to Britain."

The MP said the armed forces were working 'right across the globe' to ensure jihadis are never able to come back to the UK.

But former director of public prosecutions, Lord Macdonald, said: "It simply will not be lawful in all circumstances to kill jihadis, as the Secretary of State seems to be suggesting. We can't simply say that everyone who has gone to Iraq will now be hunted down and killed. That's a juvenile response. It's not a serious, grown-up policy response for a senior British Government minister."

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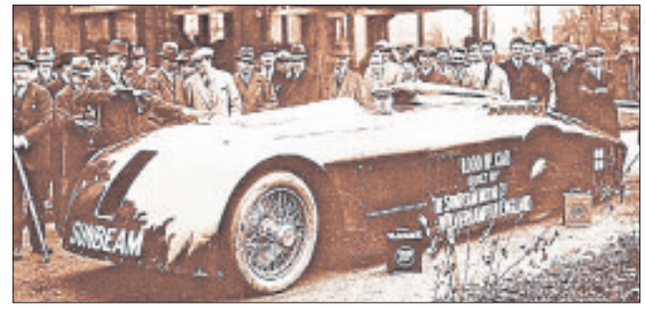
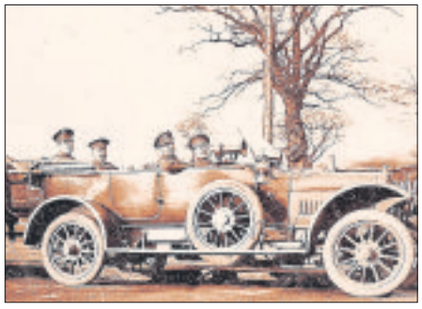
The Sunbeam Silver Bullet which made an unsuccessful land-speed bid in 1930

A Sunbeam 12-16hp parked up for a picnic, circa 1913



The world record-breaking 1000hp Sunbeam which reached 203 mph in 1927



16-hp Sunbeam staff car during the First World War

An aerial view of Sunbeam pre-World War One

Photo album sheds new light on Sunbeam story

A PHOTO album snapped up at auction has sent ripples of excitement through the small but devoted community of Sunbeam motor car enthusiasts.

The piece of transport history contains photographs and information about every item – from cars to wheel nuts – produced at the Wolverhampton-based Sunbeam factory between 1931-33.

Sunbeam, one of the great names in British car manufacturing, employed 4,500 people at the height of its success in the 1920s. But despite its reputation for quality cars, it fell into financial difficulties and production was stopped in 1935. Rootes took over but many precious records were subsequently lost or thrown out.

Much work has been done by fans of the iconic brand, who launched the Sunbeam Talbot Darracq (STD) Register in 1950 for owners and supporters,

MEMORY LANE

By Marion Brennan

to preserve documents, drawings and other data relating to the car. They are thrilled by this latest discovery.

Ben Yates, archivist of the STD Register, said: "The album is an important find. We've never had a full record for any period of production so this is really quite special. It's an official company reference volume – we never even knew of the existence of Sunbeam's own listings.

Continuous

"We have other albums of photos produced by various companies but not a continuous record of production over more than two years, showing not only all the company's products but the works, state-of-the-art machines and people working them."

The group paid almost £1,000 for the album at a recent auction by Cuttlestones in Wolverhampton. It was previously owned by a local man, now 72, whose grandfather worked at Sunbeam, thought to be as a toolmaker.

His father also worked for the company, joining directly from school, and towards the end of its existence was based in the bus section. He then transferred to Guy Motors, who bought the Sunbeam Trolleybus Company in 1949.

According to the vendor, who does not wish to be named, his father 'rescued' the album in 1935 when Sunbeam went into liquidation as the volume, along with the majority of company records were simply being thrown out.

Mr Yates said: "This is a story we have heard from many former Sunbeam employees, particularly at the Wolverhampton rallies the STD organised from the 1950s until the Centenary Rally in 1999. There are, apparently, no longer any surviving employees."

Realising its importance, and with no descendants to pass the album on to, the vendor offered it for sale.

Sunbeam 16-20hp belonged to an Indian prince

How former Sunbeam factory used to look

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, December 14, 2017

Deck the halls with vintage decorations

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips

WITH the festive season almost upon us many people will be busy decorating their homes – and so it's timely to remind you all that a number of vintage items make great decorations!

Candles of course play a vital role in creating that seasonal atmosphere and they can be housed in anything from silver candlesticks to pretty china cups.

Red and green candles are the obvious choice for the more formal holders and scented tea-lights might be placed in cups decorated with holly, berries and ivy.

China bowls can be used for potpourri, pine cones and fruit and actually look quite good heaped with brightly-coloured baubles.

Use vintage urns and planters for seasonal plants like poinsettia (although remember to keep these well away from cats as they are poisonous to them!) and large vases for displays of greenery such as holly and ivy.

If you can find some, put Victorian or Edwardian Christmas cards on display with your modern ones and why not add some vintage toys, such as small dolls and teddies, to your present collection around the tree?

If you're lucky you can find some antique tree ornaments in good condition, the older ones are more difficult to track down but it possible to find later ones still boxed and pristine (these kind of decorations tend to be well looked after and stored in their original boxes).

Again if you are fortunate you might also be able to find a 'snow baby; these charming decorations date back to Victorian times and are delightful little model figures.

If you have the room and have one to hand (or can buy one) pile up your presents on a vintage sleigh – if you're lucky it may serve a dual purpose if we have a white Christmas this year!

• The Old Mill Antiques Centre, in Mill Street, Low Town, Bridgnorth is open seven days a week from 10am until 5pm. This year, for the first time ever, we are opening for late-night festive shopping until 8pm every Wednesday until Christmas and Charlie's Tea Rooms will be open at the same time. There is free parking for customers.

Delight in creativity that simple things can bring

Coloured pencils – how many

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis

I'VE just watched an advert on the television for a Parker pen. In the 1970s and 1980s these were the ultimate gift for achievements, good exam results, completing your degree or a new job.

A shiny cased, refillable writing implement with a stylised arrow pocket clip and a padded leather look box. It was an item of beauty.

Thirty plus years on an we rarely need a pen or pencil, the technology we carry acts as a notebook, journal or diary, immediate words written, saved and able to be sent at the touch of a button.

I love the mechanics of today's documentation but would miss the delight of pen and paper. My son would struggle to find a pencil in his house, it is not a necessary implement for today's society.

Our children do their homework on a laptop and the teacher works from an interactive whiteboard in the classroom. No longer will a secret handwritten note be passed around behind the teachers back, a text message will appear on the recipient's phone instead.

I personally make lists, keep notebooks, write stories and draw and love to look back on the scribbles and words that remind me of specifics and create visual images.

I get amazing delight from purchasing new sketchpads, diaries and journals and complete excitement when I write in them for the very first time.

Brain

I run a drawing group every week in Market Drayton and am thrilled by the ability of the members with only a pencil and sketchbook. A sense of achievement from the final picture and great fun too.

It helps with articulation and creativity and exercises different parts of the brain.

There are some fabulous products around this year which make wonderful Christmas presents for anyone and everyone. Make up a package of brightly coloured sketch pads, diaries and project books with a colour theme or design from Wilco or B&M, add some shiny pencils, pens and character rubbers.

WH Smith has beautiful notebooks to suit any personality. You can buy list pads with rip off pages, journals with spaces for photos and keepsakes. The Works sell value art and paper products to keep any age happy.

Someone who loves to write would value a delightful boxed fountain pen and bottle of ink or a pen and pencil combination encased in wood or glass, online sellers such as Amazon and ebay have exciting offers and the gift company 'not on the high street' offer personalised and unusual handwriting gifts.

I embrace the new technology, the incredible changes that improve our lives, the fountain pen has been replaced by the Sharpie and brushes and canvas by a tablet screen but there is delight in the creativity of what the simple things can bring us.

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Make a table sparkle with silver and white: Luxury Hotel Collection Harrington 44 Piece Cutlery Set, £130; Linea Set of 10 Copper and Champagne Crackers, £18 for pack of 10; Linea Hotel Collection Pembury glassware, from £22; Linea Paper Stars LED Lights, £14; Silver Effect Mercury Bauble, £6; Star Votive Candleholder, from £8-£20: Prelit Natural Snow Garland, all House of Fraser.

A glamorous setting featuring top picks from Debenhams, including Jasper Conran Round Decanter, £36; Silver Stag Christmas Candelabra, currently reduced to £24.50 from £35; Gold Metallic Napkins, currently reduced to £9.80 from £14 for set of four; Gold Beaded Napkin Rings, currently reduced to £11.20 from £16 for set of four; Canvas Home White Metallic Glazed Dauville Dinner Plates, £30 each, and also matching Bowls £15 each (all from Debenhams).

How to lay on the festive style with a table setting

By Gabrielle Fagan

Gold and animal print make for a funky table setting: Leopard Print Dinner Set, currently reduced from £25 to £20; Glitter Stag Ornament, £5, George Home at Asda

THE festive season is almost upon us, which means it's time to step up to the table – and transform it into a stunning setting for the most important meal of the year.

Choose from a colour scheme of silver, gold or classic red and white (maybe with a dash of Highland tartan) for a Christmas table that will attract just as many compliments as the food.

We've already scoped out the best buys on the high street; all you need to do is choose your favourites, and then pop on some carols and set the scene...

Set a silver shimmer

"Forget any minimalist tendencies and go all out with the glamour and sparkle this Christmas. Gold or silver are festive favourites, but this year, also consider introducing dark, moody tones," says Clare Harris, managing director at Talking Tables (talkingtables.co.uk). "A grey or even black tablecloth creates a dramatic backdrop, and shows off your table decorations more effectively than white. If you're going for a single colour, use a mix of textures and finishes.

"A collection of beautiful mercury glass baubles moves a silver scheme from classic to contemporary, especially with the introduction of glittering disco balls.

"Surprise your guests by taking your table scheme in new directions," she adds. "Clusters of paper honeycomb, and pompom decorations hung overhead, are a new approach to table decorating, which saves crucial table space and elevates the setting."

Go for glittering gold

"The Christmas table is an opportunity to go completely OTT and let your creative flair run wild. The whole day is about extravagance, indulgence and glamour, so I love to go a little crazy with the decorating," says Jenny Hurren, founder of Out There Interiors (outthereinteriors.com).

"The food is a beautiful sight in itself, but why not add some glitz and glamour to the proceedings and adorn the table with beautiful place settings, decorative touches and 'the decent' china?

"My favourite is gold-painted twigs and foliage," adds Jenny. "Eucalyptus leaves look stunning with a touch of gold spray paint.

"Run a few sprigs along the middle of the table, intertwining them through glass stems, around dishes and bowls and dangle them off the end. Use small bunches of them tied with ribbon and a named luggage label as a truly personal place setting.

"If you have the space, add a statement centre piece, such as a quirky gold pineapple, and team the whole look with fresh white linens and elegant glassware."

Stay true to tradition

"Always start with a theme and keep to one or two key colours, and then build up the setting. Have in mind the general look you want to achieve, for example classic red and white, rustic, opulent or minimal," says Danielle Tolson, co-founder of Tolly McRae (tollymcrae.co.uk), specialists in luxury table linen, among other things.

"This year, I'll be using gold as the core theme, with dusky pink accents, and I'm going for an overall opulent effect.

"More is more as far as I'm concerned, and our table will be crammed with flickering candles, sparkling cutlery and glasses.

"For a centrepiece, a glass bowl filled with pine cones, baubles or even a foliage garland is effective.

" Alternatively, lightly spray fruit – pomegranates, pineapples and other exotic fruit - with gold paint and arrange in a clear glass bowl.

"Why not add a string of twinkling fairy lights?"

Fly-tipping trips cost van driver more than £2k

A BLACK Country man who illegally dumped rubbish in a lay-by three times has received a 10-week suspended sentence.

George Anderson, of Fisher Street, Tipton, pleaded guilty to three offences of fly-tipping before magistrates in Worcester on Thursday.

The court heard officers on a routine check on March 15 in the Icknield Street area of Bromsgrove noticed a large quantity of waste had been dumped in the lay-by.

A camera caught a van and Anderson was identified through its insurance.

On April 7 officers were again conducting routine checks of the area and again discovered a large quantity of waste had been dumped in the lay-by.

Upon examination of the recordings taken from the cameras the same Ford Transit was seen on two occasions on April 5 depositing a large quantity of waste.

Anderson, aged 23, now has to complete 80 hours' community service and pay more than £2,000.

A Bromsgrove District Council spokesperson said: "We will not tolerate fly-tipping which is not only an eyesore but which is expensive to clean up and is paid for by the council taxpayers of Bromsgrove."

Last orders as 'saved' pub now faces closure

A PUB in Dudley is set serve customers today (Thursday) for the last time.

Regulars thought they had saved The Fiddlers Arms in Lower Gornal from the bulldozers earlier this year when more than 700 signed a petition against plans to replace it with a convenience store.

Landlord Roy Pickering, aged 59, said: "We've got a great community spirit here. It's so sad that they're not going to get their Christmas and New Years here. We're gutted." The Fiddlers Arms was among more than 200 pubs sold by Marston's to New River Retail.

Derek Barrett's photo shows the blacksmith at work

Gary Crutchley captured this shot of the fair

Robert Herringshaw pictured the hardware store

An atmospheric image of the bridge by Stacy Woolhouse for the cover

Tony Carwithen's image of the tram

Neil Brinsdon chose the colourful old fuel pumps

Museum's bostin' calendar

IT is one of the region's best loved and most photographed attractions. So to mark its 40th anniversary, the Black Country Living Museum fittingly launched a photo calendar competition to show the site at its finest.

Visitors were urged to snap their own bostin' shots of the museum and submit them for a 2018 calendar – to mark four decades since its opening. Now the calendar contest winners have been named – as have some of their stunning pictures of the Dudley museum in Tipton Road.

The winners have been revealed as Stacy Woolhouse, Derek Barrett, Tony Carwithen, Robert Herringshaw, Derek Barrett, Neil Brinsdon, Stephen Davis, Gary Portman, Stephen Davis, Gary Crutchley, Paul Lucas, and Roger Bowater.

Among the winning photos, are a picture of the museum's tramway and the iconic bridge that stretches across the canal basin. Atmospheric shots have also made the calendar, as well as expertly framed photos of some of the legion of BCLM volunteers – including a chainmaker and shop owner.

Unveiling the competition earlier this year, museum bosses said: "2018 is a very special year for us here at Black Country Living Museum; it marks 40 years since we opened our doors.

Inspiring

"We've had a great 40 years welcoming you into the inspiring stories of real people, their streets and homes, work and daily lives. To celebrate, we want to create a 2018 calendar compiled of photographs from our visitors."

The quality of the photos has been praised on the museum's Facebook page. Jenni Hodgetts said: "Brilliant pictures really captures the feel for the old Black Country," while Paul Cox posted: "Well done everyone, great quality photos well deserved."

The calendar is A4 and opens out to A3 with a hole for hanging. The months also carry the museum's special events dates. The calendar sells for £9.95. Visit bclm.co.uk website.

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, December 14, 2017

Enrich your habitat and help protect wildlife too

PEOPLE'S Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), a UK conservation charity, has released its annual Christmas gift catalogue.

The creative and quirky range of gift ideas will help the most endangered wildlife across Britain and throughout the world, with 100 per cent of profits going directly to help wildlife in need.

There are gifts to suit all interests varying from improving your own habitat with beautifully designed tea towels and cushions, to supporting conservation projects by giving snow leopards a safe place to roam.

There are also gifts for all budgets from wooden keyrings for £4.50 to original watercolour wildlife illustrations for £45. New items this year range from eco-friendly seedballs to original wildlife themed artwork exclusive to PTES so whether you want to save the bees or protect the pine martens, there is something for everyone.

The full range of wildlife gifts, ideal for anyone wild about wildlife, can be viewed and purchased online at www.ptes.org/shop.

Gifts of Nature (prices range from £10 - £50)

PTES has some unique gift ideas in their Gifts of Nature range. 100% of the money raised will help save endangered species worldwide. Gift options include:

Honeymoon hamper: providing newly released dormice with food until they can fend for themselves in the wild

Gardener's friend: encouraging the public to create hedgehog holes and connect their gardens to form Hedgehog Highways

Fighting for survival: educating more people in the conservation of stag beetles

Winter wonderland: supporting coppicing practices in ancient woodland to help species such as red squirrels and hazel dormice through winter and spring

Location, location, re-location: relocating the rare pine marten from Scotland to a new lush woodland home in Wales

Tails of the riverbank: helping save water voles in the UK and boost their numbers by improving their riverbank homes

Passage to India: working with villagers in India to plan agricultural work around elephant migratory routes & promoting alternative forms of livelihood

Save orangutan forest: training forest managers in Indonesia to help protect the Bornean orang-utan from extinction

Snow leopard patrol: creating new patrol zones across Mongolia so more snow leopards can roam free

Funky gibbon: training forest rangers to monitor and report illegal poaching of western hoolock gibbons and educating communities to respect this species

Wildlife Guides & Publications

For a comprehensive understanding of Britain's mammals in both the countryside and urban environments, PTES has two concise and beautifully illustrated guides so you can learn more about the wildlife living on your doorstep. Urban Mammals: A Concise Guide and Britain's Mammals: A Concise Guide are priced at £9.99 each or both for £15.00.

Canvas shopping bag

Do your shopping in style with a beautifully designed laminated canvas bag printed in water based inks. With a large capacity of 38 x 14 x 40cm, it is the perfect size to take wherever you go. Made to a standard approved by 'Bag of Ethics'. Choose from: dormouse or hedgehog motifs. Only £9 each.

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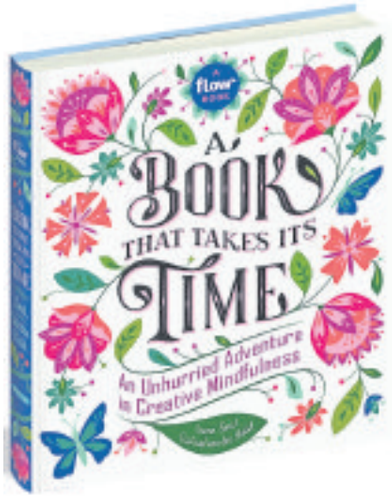
Choose from: Mr Badger, Honey the Hedgehog, Rusty the Fox and Vintage Apple. Each fabulously designed notepad has 60 ruled pages. Each design reflects a love of wildlife and nature, and are priced at £3.50 each.

Dormouse Christmas cards

Exclusive to PTES, this delightful dormouse Christmas card is sure to make you want to curl up by the fire with a mince pie. Each card is 12.5 x 12.5cm and features the message "Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year". A lovely card to spread some Christmas cheer, and are priced at £4.50 for a pack of ten.



A Book That Takes Its Time, £21.99

Creators of Flow magazine, Irene Smit and Astrid van der Hulst

Remodelista: The Organized Home, £20

Beautiful new books with pages of pure inspiration

BOOKS are the perfect gift for Christmas and any time of year, they can be opened and enjoyed again and again.

Workman Publishing has offered up a feast of new titles, with something to suit everyone's interest and tastes.

With interest growing in the concept of mindfulness, **A Book That Takes Its Time**, £21.99, offers plenty of food for thought.

This one-of-a-kind guide would be the perfect present for a loved one or for yourself. If you've not yet embraced the concept of taking pleasure in the simple things, the here and now and living 'in the moment', this book will take you on a mini mindfulness retreat.

A beautifully presented and very clever creation, it comes from the creators of Flow magazine, Irene Smit and Astrid van der Hulst who say: "We need more stillness, more downtime, more mindfulness. And that's what this book will bring you. In fact we invented something entirely new to do just that."

Each chapter is full of inspirational ideas to encourage you to make more time to learn, create, relax or simply breathe.

Perspective

It's the perfect antidote to the manic festive season ahead, giving tips to help you worry less, feel more at peace and change your perspective.

It also offers solace in the dark and depressing post-Christmas lull, when it can be easy to fall victim to the January blues.

"Life is so much better when you enjoy living in the now, when you focus more on the beautiful moments and when you don't expect so much of yourself all the time."

There are hands-on activities such as crafts and journals, with stickers, postcards and decorative papers for collaging, enabling you to create a lovely keepsake. Instead of simply reading about the concept, you can actively take part and put its theories into practice.

This is not a traditional page-turner, this is a book that requires you to take your time, indulge and enjoy.

Also available from Workman Publishing is the **John Derian Engagement Calendar** priced at £16.99.

John Derian is an American decoupage artist and designer who transforms printed images from the past. His decoupage plates, platters, paperweights, coasters, and bowls are sold at upscale home stores, in catalogues, and at gift shops worldwide.

The planner pulls together 52 favourite John Derian images in a cross between a desk diary and a calender, which is small enough to be be carried with you.

There is a spread for every week of the year, decorated with all manner of interesting subjects such as anatomical prints, beetles and a long-lost love note. Together they constitute a beautifully designed and sophisticated product. It comes gift-boxed with a ribbon bookmark and would be the perfect addition to any desk, either at work or in the home office.

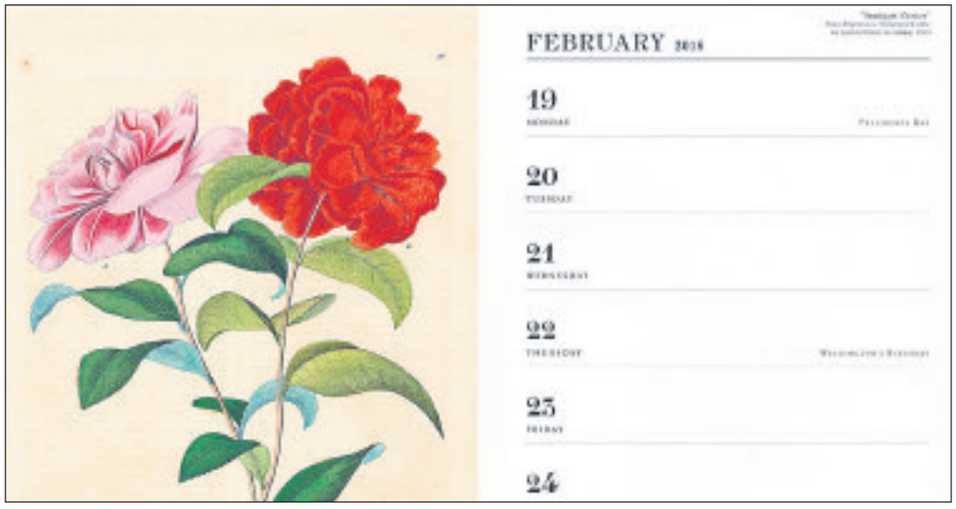
The quirky designs transport you to another world, where the imagination runs wild.

One-of-a-kind images are enhanced to create curious and fascinating pieces, from pea-pod people to giant eyeballs. Finally, for those who need a little inspiration keeping their home or work space tidy, Workman Publishing has also released **Remodelista: The Organized Home**, £20, full of tips for simple, stylish storage.

This guide put together by Julie Carlson and Margot Guralnick, with photographs by Matthew Williams, encourages readers to buy fewer (and better) things, get rid of the plastic and display, not stash, belongings.

You can lean how to tame the cord jungle, decant and 'think beyond the box'. There are more than 100 tips for room-by-room improvements, with interviews from experts such as a kindergarten teacher, a hotelier and a boat builder on how to make the most of limited space.

With new year resolutions on the horizon, it's the ideal read for the Christmas holidays and will inspire you to get organised for 2018.



Beautiful designs on every page – enjoy John Derian's eye for decoupage all year round

The John Derian Engagement Calendar

More examples of John Derian's decoupage creations

The Ticket

OH WHAT A NIGHT! IT'S JERSEY BOYS

INSIDE

MUSIC + THEATRE + PUZZLES + TV GUIDE

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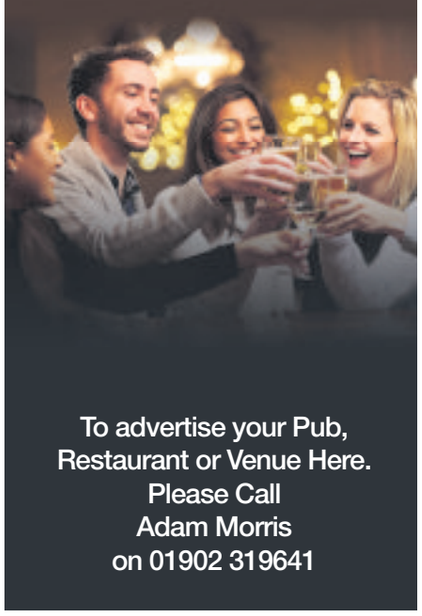

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They're just too good to be true!

Oh what a night! The internationally acclaimed stage sensation, Jersey Boys, is working its way back to Birmingham with a festive run at the city's New Alexandra Theatre.

The hit musical has won 57 major awards, including the Olivier Award for Best New Musical, and will be on from tomorrow until January 6.

Jersey Boys tells the true life story of four boys from the wrong side of the tracks who wrote their own songs, invented their own unique sound, and sold 100 million records worldwide as Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons..

Featuring hit after legendary hit including Beggin', December 1963 (Oh What A Night), Can't Take My Eyes Off You, Walk Like A Man, Bye Bye Baby, Big Girls Don't Cry and many more, Jersey Boys is a story full of heart, humour and sheer musical razzmatazz.

The show features a starry cast of West End actors, including Simon Bailey who stars as Tommy DeVito.

Simon has carved out an impressive career after starring in Bat Boy, Marry Me A Little, I Can't Sing! The X-Factor Musical, Phantom of the Opera, Parade, Passion, Les Miserables and Joseph.

He was present when Jersey Boys began its nine-year run in London and went to the first night. "I didn't know about the music at first. But I went to the first night and within four minutes I knew I had to do it. I've bided my time until the part became available.

"To be honest with you, the show is so well written and so slick. The story is fast-paced and intelligently written. Essentially, you get the same story – the story of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons – told by four different people. Seeing everyone's individual take on what happened is great because everyone gets to tell their side of the story. The way that the music comes in is brilliant. It's so fast-paced. You kind of forget you're watching something. It's seamless and faultless."

IDENTIFY

Simon loves shows that give fans the maximum value for money.

"You are fully entertained for two-and-a-half hours. You just want to watch it again and again and again.

"I saw it 8 or 10 times and I became a fan of the show before I got to be in it."

The present tour features Michael Watson as Frankie Valli, Simon as Tommy De Vito, Declan Egan as Bob Gaudio and Lewis Griffiths as Nick Massi. All four have previously performed their roles in Jersey Boys to great acclaim: Michael and Simon in the West End, Declan in the West End and Australia, and Lewis in the first UK and Ireland tour.

Simon was delighted to be cast as De Vito. "Tommy is great. The thing I loved about it is that you need to find something you can identify with. I always identified with his desire to succeed. While I may not agree with him methods – but they make him fun to play – I respect and admire his desire to succeed. If you are growing up where they grew up, you either went into the army and die, go into the mob and die or be a star and don't die. Being in a band got him out of the wrong place. He did what he had to do. He discovered Frankie and it all came together. Tommy was the catalyst."

Simon spends most of his time in London's West End but was thrilled to be given a chance to get back on the road.

"This is my third tour. I did the Phantom of the Opera 25th anniversary back in 2012 and I did something at the start of my career. I've always enjoyed travel, internationally and nationally, so being on the road is great. Leaving London for a while is no bad thing, it refreshes you. I love the energy the audiences bring. We are in for a couple of weeks at a time and the audiences want to enjoy it."

Simon says the days of getting great shows in the West End and second tier shows in the provinces are long gone. These days, there's no difference in quality. Fans at Birmingham can look forward to a first class show.

"You get the great shows in the provinces these days. That dividing line between the West End and the rest of the UK is obsolete.

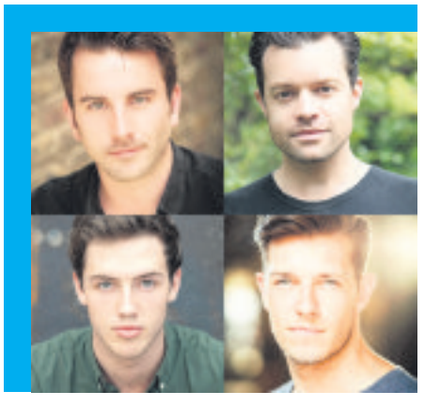
"I grew up going to the West End. I was very, very lucky. My parents were very much into the theatre. I was one of the lucky ones who went to see West End theatre from a very early age. One of the first things I ever saw was Joseph at the palladium with Jason Donovan. I will never forget the feeling of being in the theatre and it was so big and wonderful and magical. I was watching this whole brand new life and story on stage. It kind of blew my mind. I did a show at the Palladium a couple of years ago called I Can't Sing. I remember walking out on stage and seeing the seat I was sat in all those years before. It made me feel like a very lucky human being. Now I have the ability to transport other people and that's a real privilege."

ANDY RICHARDSON

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Walk like a man – Jersey Boys will appear at the New Alex

To be honest, the show is so well written and so slick



Fairy Godmother Beverley Knight

Beverley leads all-star cast in panto spectacular

WOLVERHAMPTON soul diva Beverley Knight will make her pantomime debut in Cinderella, this year's Birmingham Hippodrome spectacular.

Beverley will be starring alongside Strictly Come Dancing 2016 finalist Danny Mac, Brum panto favourite Matt Slack, pop singer and Dancing On Ice star Suzanne Shaw, and veteran comedy duo The Grumbleweeds. The show will also feature the most faaabulous Ugly Sisters, Ceri Dupree and Phil Randall.

Cinderella promises all the ingredients of the perfect Hippodrome panto – great cast, laugh-out-loud comedy, lots of pop music, dazzling special effects and extravagant costumes. Cinderella runs from Tuesday until January 28.

Other festive shows for the family include 101 Dalmations, Debbie Issit's version of the story that became a Disney classic, with actors and amazing puppets at Birmingham Rep until January 13.

Wolverhampton's panto at the Grand stars singer Gareth Gates with Lisa Riley and the Black Country's own Doreen Tipton in Jack And The Beanstalk, at the Lichfield Street theatre until January 14.

Arena Birmingham is putting on a big event panto in the city centre mega-venue from December 20 to Christmas Eve with Peter Pan, starring Martin Kemp (of EastEnders and Spandau Ballet) as Captain Hook and Bradley Walsh (TV host and new Doctor Who companion) as Mr Smee. With a cast of 100 performers it is described as 'the world's biggest panto'.

Festive music from pop to carols

There's a feast of festive music ahead this weekend and in the run up to Christmas, from pop to folk, classical to carols.

Slade get things rocking with Dave Hill and Don Powell in a sold out gig at Bilston's Robin 2 tomorrow night (Friday), whilst Midlands Hospital Choir Sing Noel in two concerts at Birmingham Town Hall tomorrow, 2.15 and 7pm.

Brum rocker Roy Wood brings his special Rockmas concert to the Symphony Hall on Saturday featuring special guest Paul Young. Expect to hear I wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday. Also on Saturday 'the Barnsley Nightingale', folk singer-songwriter Kate Rusby, brings her Christmas show to Birmingham Town Hall. Meanwhile, '70s hits, including Rivers of Babylon, will be revived at the Robin 2 by Boney M featuring original member Maizie Williams, who grew up in Birmingham.

Celebrated Welsh singer Katherine Jenkins, pictured, performs her festive concert at the Symphony Hall on Sunday evening.

There is a Christmas Carol Singalong led by Jonathan Cohen and featuring West End star Louise Dearman at Symphony Hall on Monday at 2.30pm and then in the evening the same venue host Classic Carols with the City of Birmingham Choir and readings from actor and TV presenter Sir Tony Robison.

On Monday night Birmingham Town Hall hosts Yuletide laughs and music when the Rainer Hersch Orkestra present Christmas No1 Pop Singalong.

For three consecutive nights, Tuesday to Thursday at Symphony Hall, A Choral Christmas features City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Choruses in concerts hosted by Ore Oduba.

Singer has home city concert date

ACCLAIMED Wolverhampton singer-songwriter Dan Whitehouse has a homecoming concert at Newhampton Arts Centre in Dunkley Street on Sunday. Dan, who released his fourth album That's Where I Belong last year, will be performing with a band and is supported by The Little Unsaid and Matt Sayers. The seated concert starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £10. The 38-year-old musician will return in January as part of the city's Literary Festival to give a songwriting workshop.

Time to take trip down the digital rabbit hole

A PROFESSIONAL cast is joined by an ensemble of 26 students from Birmingham Ormiston Academy for a production of Lewis Carroll's Alice In Wonderland at Birmingham's Old Rep theatre, next to Grand Central. Grace Dean takes on the title role of Alice with Alec Fellows-Bennett as the Mad Hatter in a show that will feature morning and afternoon performances until December 30. Audiences can expect a puppet cat and a digital rabbit hole in this new adaptation of a classic. This will be the the third Christmas production produced by Birmingham Ormiston Academy, the regional academy for digital, creative and performing arts. The creative team are led by Scott Le Crass who has directed both locally and nationally since graduating from the Birmingham Rep Foundry programme.

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SATURDAY'S TV DECEMBER 16

CHOICE

Shirley Ballas

Strictly Come Dancing - The Final
(BBC1, 6.30pm)
Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the live grand final, which sees the final three celebrity contestants and their partners taking to the stage in dances that will determine whether they claim the glitterball trophy. Shirley Ballas, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell offer their comments and score the performances, but as always, their opinions are merely guidance - the decision as to who waltzes off with this year's title is down to the viewers' vote. As the winner is decided, the rest of the 2017 cast are expected to return for one final, celebratory group performance.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Sports Personality of the Year 2017 – The Contenders. (R) **2.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.25** BBC News. **5.35** Regional Programme. **5.40** Pointless Celebrities. (R)

6.30 Strictly Come Dancing – The Final. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the live grand final, which sees the final three celebrity contestants and their partners taking to the stage in dances that will determine whether they claim the glitterball trophy. Shirley Ballas, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell offer their comments and score the performances, but as always, their opinions are merely guidance – the decision as to who waltzes off with this year's title is down to the viewers' vote. As the winner is decided, the rest of the 2017 cast are expected to return for one final, celebratory group performance.

9.00 Michael McIntyre's Big Show. The comedian hosts another evening of entertainment, as Irish singer and One Direction graduate Niall Horan performs on stage. Also delighting the masses tonight is Michael's fellow funnyman Jason Manford, and actress, comedienne and accomplished prat-faller Miranda Hart risks offending her family and friends as she hands her phone over in Celebrity Send-to-All. Plus, an A&E doctor is tricked into believing the theatre is actually a grand hotel as the host stages another ambitious Unexpected Star stunt.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.

10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester City v Tottenham Hotspur.

11.45 The NFL Show. Mark Chapman is joined by former players Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell to present highlights of Thursday night's game, plus a look at the major stories shaping the NFL world.

12.15 Film: Surviving Christmas. (2004) **1.40** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.45** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman. (R) **7.00** Nature's Weirdest Events. (R) **7.30** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **8.00** Deadly 60. (R) **8.30** Show Me What You're Made Of: UK. **9.00** Saturday Mash-Up! **11.00** Penguins on a Plane: Great Animal Moves. (R) **12.00** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.30** Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes. (R) **1.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **1.45** Coast. (R) **2.20** Garden Rescue. (R) **2.50** Mastermind. (R) **3.20 Film:** Possessed. (1947) Psychological thriller, starring Joan Crawford. **5.05** Talking Pictures: Roger Moore.

6.05 Film: Escape to Athena. (1979) Second World War Allied PoWs incarcerated on a Greek island plan to defy the SS by breaking out of prison and pulling off an art robbery, with the help of their liberal-minded camp commandant. Action adventure, with Roger Moore, David Niven, Telly Savalas, Elliott Gould, Stefanie Powers and Claudia Cardinale.

8.00 Attenborough's Life That Glows. David Attenborough explores the world of bioluminescence, the often spectacular natural light produced by creatures including glow-worms, fireflies and plankton, using specially designed cameras, some fitted to a new generation of deep-sea submersibles and robots to record instances in the very deep ocean. The programme shows a millipede glowing on the forest floor in California, the mesmerising flashing light patterns of the synchronous firefly, the spooky glow of a rare dragon fish and luminous earth worms in France. (R)

9.00 Feud: Bette and Joan. New series. Drama exploring the rivalry between Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, beginning in 1962, as Joan considers a collaboration. Starring Jessica Lange and Susan Sarandon.

9.55 Feud: Bette and Joan. Filming begins on What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?, and despite still being at odds, Bette and Joan unite as they campaign to get rid of an attractive female co-star.

10.45 QI XL.

11.30 Jeff Lynne's ELO – Wembley or Bust.

12.45 Film: Shadow of the Vampire. (2000) **2.10** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Saturday Morning with James Martin. **11.25** Gino's Italian Coastal Escape. (R) **11.50** Countrywise. (R) **12.20** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **12.45** ITV News; Weather. **12.55** Endeavour. (R) **2.55 Film:** The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas. (2000) Family comedy prequel, starring Mark Addy. **4.35** The Chase. (R) **5.35** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. (R)

6.05 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 Film: The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey. (2012) Unassuming hobbit Bilbo Baggins is pulled out of his comfortable life when Gandalf the wizard volunteers him for a dangerous quest. He joins a party of dwarves who are on a mission to reclaim their lost homeland, which has been taken over by a dragon. When the group journeys into the Misty Mountains, Bilbo becomes separated from the dwarves and falls into a cave, where he finds himself confronted by Gollum and forced to play a riddle game. It is set in Middle-earth 60 years before the events of The Lord of the Rings and is the first part of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage, James Nesbitt, Ken Stott, Cate Blanchett, Ian Holm and Christopher Lee.

9.45 ITV News; Weather.

10.00 Film: The Hangover. (2009) Three men on a stag weekend in Las Vegas wake up to find they have lost the groom and cannot remember the night before. Comedy, with Bradley Cooper.

11.55 Tonight at the London Palladium. Bradley Walsh welcomes ABC, Nathan Sykes, the West End cast of Guys and Dolls, singer Gregory Porter and classical guitarist Milos to the world-famous stage. (R)

12.45 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.55 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.20** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.45** Frasier. (R) **8.15** Frasier. (R) **8.40** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.35** The Simpsons. (R) **10.05** The Simpsons. (R) **10.35** The Simpsons. (R) **11.05 Film:** Holiday in Handcuffs. (2007) **12.50** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **1.20** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **2.25** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **2.55** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **3.30** Grand Designs. (R) **4.30** Best Laid Plans. **5.35** Channel 4 News.

6.00 Word of the Year. Susie Dent is joined by a selection of celebrity guests to reveal which prominent term has been picked by Oxford Dictionaries to become the "Word of the Year" for 2017. The usual mix of inventive insults, fashionable portmanteaus and unusual descriptions have formed the shortlist this year, taking in everything from Kim Jong Un's unexpected use of the word "dotard" to describe Donald Trump, to an explosion in the use of the word "snowflake" to describe people with an inflated sense of their uniqueness. Joining Susie to pick through this year's crop of linguistic treasures are Jo Brand, Sara Pascoe, Nish Kumar, Aisling Bea, Rick Edwards and Jamie Laing.

7.00 Guy Martin vs the Robot Car. The presenter explores the world of automated self-driving vehicles, attempting to build one of his own and taking on a computer-controlled car in a race. (R)

8.00 The World's Most Expensive Presents. Cameras follow craftsmen and women producing lavish gifts with price tags to match, including a 24-carat gold-plated bike worth £250,000. (R)

9.00 Film: Pitch Perfect. (2012) Comedy, starring Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson and Elizabeth Banks.

11.10 Film: The Inbetweeners Movie. (2011) Awkward teenagers Simon, Will, Jay and Neil head to Greece for a wild holiday – but things do not go to plan. Comedy, with Joe Thomas, Simon Bird, James Buckley and Blake Harrison.

1.00 Film: Tomorrow, When the War Began. (2010) **2.40** The Last Leg. (R) **3.35** Hollyoaks. **5.40** Extreme Cake Makers. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.50** The Gadget Show. (R) **10.45 Film:** Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?! (2014) **12.55 Film:** One Christmas Eve. (2014) Family comedy, starring Anne Heche. **2.40 Film:** Love Always, Santa. (2016) **4.25 Film:** Mariah Carey's A Christmas Melody. (2015) **5.25** 5 News Update. **5.30 Film:** Mariah Carey's A Christmas Melody. (2015) Concluded.

6.05 Sinkholes: Buried Underground. Documentary examining the underlying forces behind sinkholes, which can swallow streets, rip up motorways and even drag unfortunate bystanders to their deaths. (R)

7.00 Sinkholes: Sucked Under. Geologist Tom Backhouse investigates sinkholes caused by collapsed mine shafts, including one in Gosforth that opened up in front of a flat and led down to an abandoned mine. (R)

8.00 Sinkholes: Sucked to Death. Documentary examining the underlying forces behind sinkholes, which can swallow streets, rip up motorways and even drag unfortunate bystanders to their deaths. Last in the series. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Cardiff City v Hull City and Sunderland v Fulham.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Doncaster Rovers v Oldham Athletic and Exeter City v Stevenage.

10.30 NCIS: New Orleans. Pride investigates a murder on board a deep-sea oil rig, but his placed in peril when the team discovers a gas leak on-site is on the verge of causing a catastrophic explosion.

11.20 NCIS: New Orleans. Pride faces a conflict of interests when a hacker collective led by one of his old contacts is implicated in the theft of thousands of classified government files.

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Harrogate: A Yorkshire Christmas. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) **5.55** Access. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 All Aboard! The Sleigh Ride **9.00** Witnesses: A Frozen Death **10.55** The Vietnam War **11.50** Rich Hall's You Can Go to Hell, I'm Going to Texas **1.20** Natural World **2.20** Flamenco: Gypsy Soul **3.20** Close

ITV2
11.25 Take Me Out Celebrity Special **12.30** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Coming Out **1.35** Mr Bean **2.45 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **3.45** FYI Daily **3.50 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **4.35 Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **5.35** FYI Daily **5.40 Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **6.10 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **7.10** FYI Daily **7.15 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **7.55 Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **8.55** FYI Daily **9.00 Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **10.00** Celebrity Juice Christmas Special **11.00** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.25** The Cleveland Show **1.55** Celebrity Juice Christmas Special **2.45** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records

ITV3
12.40 Film: Columbo Goes to the Guillotine (1989) **2.40** The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes **5.00 Film:** Mamma Mia! (2008) **6.05** FYI Daily **6.10 Film:** Mamma Mia! (2008) **7.10** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Grantchester **11.10** Hattie **12.55 Film:** Up Pompeii (1971) **2.00** FYI Daily

ITV4
11.10 Film: The Last Sunset (1961) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15 Film:** The Last Sunset (1961) **1.30** ITV Racing Live from Cheltenham. Coverage from Cheltenham and Doncaster. **4.00** Storage Wars: Texas **5.00 Film:** Paranoia (2013) **6.00** FYI Daily **6.05 Film:** Paranoia (2013) **7.15 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **8.20** FYI Daily **8.25 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **9.00 Film:** Navy Seals (1990) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** Navy Seals (1990) **11.20 Film:** Universal Soldier: Day of Reckoning (2012) **12.20** FYI Daily

E4
11.45 Film: A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures (2010) **1.30** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The Hunger Games (2012) **11.50** Gogglebox **2.00** The Inbetweeners **3.30** Rude Tube **4.25** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4
11.00 Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer (2011) **1.00** Fast Girls (2012) **2.45** Volcano (1997) **4.50** The Return of the Musketeers (1989) **6.55** X-Men (2000) **9.00** Men in Black (1997) **10.55** The Purge: Anarchy (2014)

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SUNDAY'S TV DECEMBER 17

CHOICE

Alan Sugar

The Apprentice (BBC1, 9pm)
The two finalists take on their last challenge to win a coveted investment from Alan Sugar, with hand-picked teams of contestants from the series returning to aid them in their endeavours. They face a three-day challenge to create brands and adverts to pitch to a room full of experts - but a poor commercial and an uninspiring brand name do neither candidate any favours. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Mary Berry's Country House Secrets. (R) **2.15** Songs of Praise. **2.50 Film:** Toy Story 2. (1999) Animated sequel, with the voice of Tom Hanks. **4.20** Blue Planet II. (R) **5.20** BBC News. **5.35** Regional Programme. **5.45** Countryfile.

6.45 Sports Personality of the Year 2017. Gary Lineker, Clare Balding and Gabby Logan present this year's ceremony live from the Echo Arena in Liverpool. Andy Murray was presented the prestigious main award in 2016, his third overall and second in successive years. However, he is not in contention this year after an injury-plagued campaign. The shortlist this time is world heavyweight boxing champion Anthony Joshua, four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome, Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton, short-track speed skater Elise Christie, Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane, British tennis number one Johanna Konta, world superbike champion Jonathan Rea, Paralympian sprinter Jonnie Peacock, track legend Mo Farah, breaststroke world champion Adam Peaty, England cricketer Anya Shrubsole and Olympic taekwondo medallist Bianca Walkden. The Team of the Year, Coach of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Overseas Sports Personality of the Year, Young Sports Personality of the Year, Unsung Hero and Helen Rollason awards will also be handed out.

9.00 The Apprentice. The two finalists take on their last challenge to win an investment from Alan Sugar, with contestants from the series returning to aid them in their endeavours. Last in the series.

10.00 The Apprentice: You're Hired. Rhod Gilbert is joined by the winner, the runner-up and Lord Sugar himself, as the business tycoon reveals the reasons behind his final decision. Last in the series.

11.00 BBC News.

11.20 Regional Programme.

11.30 Ronny Chieng: International Student.

11.55 Weather for the Week Ahead.

12.00 BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Coast. (R) **7.05** Gardeners' World. (R) **7.35** The Secret History of the British Garden. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Escape to the Country. **1.30** Live Equestrian: Olympia 2017. Coverage of the sixth day of the Olympia International Horse Show. **4.35** Ski Sunday. **5.20 Film:** Nativity! (2009) Comedy, starring Martin Freeman.

7.00 Life in Polar Bear Town with Gordon Buchanan. Wildlife cameraman Gordon Buchanan visits the community of Churchill, Manitoba, on the shores of Canada's Hudson Bay. For two months every year, the people of Churchill must share their town with huge packs of polar bears, which gather at the bay every autumn to wait for the sea ice to form, so they can begin their winter hunt. Gordon goes on patrol with the "bear cops" charged with ensuring the towns residents – and the bears themselves – stay safe, and meets the bin-men who must dodge bears every day as they deliver refuse to the dump. He also illustrates the dangers of living in the "polar bear capital of the world" as he interviews a young woman who was mauled by a bear, right in the middle of Churchill's main street. (R)

8.00 James May's Toy Stories: The Motorcycle Diaries. The Top Gear presenter sets out to build a motorbike and sidecar entirely out of Meccano and complete a lap of the Isle of Man's TT circuit with passenger Oz Clarke. (R)

9.00 The Alternativity. Documentary about the making of a contemporary performance inspired by the nativity story.

10.00 Detectorists Christmas Special.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action.

11.30 Insert Name Here. Katy Brand, Ed Gamble, Suzannah Lipscomb and Amol Rajan join captains Richard Osman and Josh Widdicombe to answer Sue Perkins' questions about famous people who share a name. (R)

12.00 Talking Pictures: Roger Moore. (R) **1.00** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.00** Holby City. (R) **3.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ben 10. **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Tom and Jerry: Santa's Little Helpers. **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) **9.55** Countrywise Winter Wonderland. (R) **10.40** The Martin Lewis Money Show. (R) **11.10** Save Money: Good Food. (R) **11.40** How to Spend It Well at Christmas with Phillip Schofield. (R) **12.40** ITV News; Weather. **12.45 Film:** Step Up. (2006) Romantic dance drama, with Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan. **2.50** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.45** Tipping Point. (R) **5.45** The Chase: Celebrity Special.

6.45 The Chase: The Bloopers. Bradley Walsh presents a compilation of outtakes from the quiz show, featuring regular chasers the Governess, the Beast, the Vixen, the Sinnerman and the Dark Destroyer.

7.40 Regional Programme; Weather.

7.50 ITV News; Weather.

8.00 Film: The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug. (2013) The party of dwarves and their hobbit ally continue the quest to reclaim their lost kingdom, journeying through the forest home of ancestral enemy the elves and finally facing the dragon that drove them from their home. Meanwhile, Gandalf the wizard investigates the rise of a mysterious dark power. Part two of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage and Orlando Bloom.

11.05 ITV News; Weather.

11.25 Through the Christmas Keyhole. Keith Lemon hosts a Christmas special of the game show, as celebrity panellists Shayne Ward, Kelly Brook and Johnny Vegas are asked to identify the homes of the rich and famous. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.00** Tenable. Quiz, hosted by Warwick Davis. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **6.35** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Paul Hollywood: A Baker's Life. (R) **1.00** Jamie's Ultimate Christmas. (R) **2.05** The Simpsons. (R) **2.35** The Simpsons. (R) **3.05 Film:** Jingle All the Way. (1996) Comedy, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. **4.50** Born Silly. **5.20** Channel 4 News. **5.50 Film:** Miracle on 34th Street. (1994) Christmas family drama remake, with Richard Attenborough.

8.00 Coastal Railways with Julie Walters. The actress travels from Cardigan Bay to Liverpool, visiting the heritage railway in Tywyn that was the inspiration for Thomas the Tank Engine and a community that is famous for knitting. She also paints a carriage in Boston Lodge, catches the famous Ffestiniog railway through Snowdonia, and visits Europe's fastest zip wire and largest pet cemetery. Last in the series.

9.00 Inside Bentley: A Very British Motor Car. Documentary going behind the scenes at the car company's plant in northwest England, as work commences on a new range of 4x4s. This is the first time cameras have had access to the plant, which is currently undergoing millions in new investment. The programme features the local people and master craftsmen working on the factory floor as well as visiting the world's most exclusive car showroom in Mayfair and the secretive department where customers can obtain the latest upgrades to their bespoke vehicle.

10.00 Film: Die Hard. (1988) A New York cop battles armed men who have taken over a Los Angeles skyscraper where his wife is working on Christmas Eve. Action thriller, starring Bruce Willis and Alan Rickman.

12.35 Film: Mercury Rising. (1998) An FBI agent shields an autistic child from government assassins after the boy cracks a supposedly unbreakable top-secret code. Thriller, starring Bruce Willis and Alec Baldwin. **2.25 Film:** I Origins. (2014) Drama, starring Michael Pitt. **4.10** Location, Location, Location. Revisiting house-hunters in Kent and Edinburgh. (R) **5.05** Extreme Cake Makers. (R) **5.35** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.15** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Wissper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.10** Puffin Rock. **7.15** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **7.20** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.30** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00 Film:** Season's Greetings. (2016) Festive comedy, starring Laura Bell Bundy. **1.50 Film:** Twelve Trees of Christmas. (2013) Drama, starring Lindy Booth. **3.35 Film:** Our First Christmas. (2008) Family drama, starring Julie Warner. **4.35** 5 News Update. **4.40 Film:** Our First Christmas. (2008) Concluded. **5.20** 5 News Weekend. **5.25 Film:** A Heavenly Christmas. (2016) Premiere. Festive romance, starring Kristin Davis.

7.10 Film: Legally Blonde. (2001) A dizzy teenager enrols at Harvard to try to prove to her ex-boyfriend that she is not stupid, but finds herself out of her depth. Comedy, with Reese Witherspoon and Luke Wilson.

8.10 5 News Update.

8.15 Film: Legally Blonde. (2001) Concluded.

9.00 Agatha Christie's Crooked House. Adaptation of the mystery novel, starring Max Irons and Terence Stamp. The son of the assistant commissioner at Scotland Yard returns to London from Cairo following the end of the Second World War, only to discover his fiancee's grandfather has been murdered. He uses his father's connections to become involved in the investigation, only to discover nobody has an alibi but the woman he loves may have a motive. With Gillian Anderson and Glenn Close.

11.00 Film: Sleepy Hollow. (1999) A sceptical 18th-century detective takes on a headless horseman who decapitates his victims. Tim Burton's gothic horror, with Johnny Depp.

12.55 Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** My Crazy Christmas Obsession. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** Great Continental Railway Journeys **8.00** Mrs Dickens' Family Christmas **9.00** The Mystery of Edwin Drood **11.00** The Real Star of Bethlehem: A Sky at Night Christmas Special **12.00** The Genius of Marie Curie – The Woman Who Lit Up the World **1.00** Roger Bannister: Everest on the Track **2.00** Timeshift: Mods, Rockers and Bank Holiday Mayhem

ITV2
11.50 Take Me Out Celebrity Special **12.55** Mr Bean **2.00 Film:** Jack Frost (1998) **3.00** FYI Daily **3.05 Film:** Jack Frost (1998) **4.05** Catchphrase Christmas Special **5.05 Film:** Happy Feet (2006) **6.05** FYI Daily **6.10 Film:** Happy Feet (2006) **7.15 Film:** Gravity (2013) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20 Film:** Gravity (2013) **9.00 Film:** The Holiday (2006) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** The Holiday (2006) **11.45** Family Guy **1.40** American Dad!

ITV3
1.30 Film: Columbo: The Most Dangerous Match (1973) **3.10 Film:** Columbo: Sex and the Married Detective (1989) **5.15 Film:** Up Pompeii (1971) **6.20** FYI Daily **6.25 Film:** Up Pompeii (1971) **6.55** Doc Martin **9.00** Tommy Cooper Forever **11.00** A Touch of Frost **1.05** The Knock

ITV4
11.25 Film: Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **1.10 Film:** Red River (1948) **2.10** FYI Daily **2.15 Film:** Red River (1948) **3.55 Film:** Bend of the River (1952) **4.55** FYI Daily **5.00 Film:** Bend of the River (1952) **5.55** British Superbike Championship Review 2017 **7.55** River Monsters **9.00 Film:** Species II (1998) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** Species II (1998) **10.55 Film:** Gangs of New York (2002) **11.55** FYI Daily **12.00 Film:** Gangs of New York (2002)

E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00 Film:** Catch That Kid (2004) **1.50** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.00** The Goldbergs **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** The Three Musketeers (2011) **10.10** Gogglebox **12.20** The Inbetweeners **2.00** Rude Tube: All Things Weird and Wonderful **3.00** Gogglebox **3.55** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 The Book of Life (2014) **1.00** First Daughter (2004) **3.20** The Train (1964) **6.05** Robin Hood (2010) **9.00** Thor (2011) **11.15** Love Is Strange (2014) **1.05** Mindscape (2013) **3.10** Close

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PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Christmas Bucket List, Channel 5, 5.20pm
Isobel plans a storybook Christmas with her boyfriend, including a snow-covered cottage and a carefully selected list of holiday traditions, but he goes Awol and a tempting new romance turns her life upside down. Comedy, starring Alicia Witt. (2016)

TUESDAY
A Prince for Christmas, Channel 5, 5.25pm
In an effort to escape his upcoming arranged marriage, a European prince travels to America incognito over Christmas, where he meets a charming waitress. Festive romance, starring Viva Bianca and Kirk Barker. (2015)

WEDNESDAY
James and the Giant Peach, Channel 5, 12.25pm
An unhappy orphan living with his cruel aunts discovers a gigantic peach growing in the garden. Venturing inside, he meets six friendly insects and together they embark on a magical journey. Animated and live-action fantasy, based on Roald Dahl's novel, starring Paul Terry, Joanna Lumley and Miriam Margolyes. (1996)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Friday, BBC1, 1.45pm

THURSDAY
Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit, BBC1, 3.35pm
Inventor Wallace and his canine sidekick Gromit have set up a pest-control service, and are called in to stop rabbits overrunning a garden show. However, the pair are overwhelmed when a destructive giant bunny arrives on the scene, while an interfering aristocrat contrives to make matters worse. Nick Park's Oscar-winning animated adventure, with the voices of Peter Sallis and Ralph Fiennes. (2005)

FRIDAY
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, BBC1, 1.45pm
The intrepid archaeologist sets out to find his estranged father, who has gone missing while searching for the Holy Grail. Once reunited, the duo team up to finish the task and locate the sacred relic before the Nazis get their hands on it. Action adventure sequel, starring Harrison Ford. (1989)

The Gentlemen are still in a League of their own

If there's one thing you're guaranteed when tuning into The League of Gentlemen it's trouble – and as Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith are back for three special editions this week, you can bet there'll be trouble aplenty in Royston Vasey.

If you haven't heard of the show, it focuses on some of the strangest characters ever to grace the small screen.

Take Edward and Tubbs, for example. They're a brother and sister living in "a local shop for local people" who hate strangers and bump them off at every opportunity, while Harvey and Val Denton are the relatives from Hell with a penchant for toads.

Then there's Barbara, the transsexual cab driver whose operation seems to have gone horribly wrong, and Pauline, a vindictive employment restart officer totally obsessed with pens.

But it's been a decade and a half since we last saw the boys all working together, in tandem with their writing partner, Jeremy Dyson. They've decided to resurrect the town and its weird and wonderful inhabitants to celebrate the 20th anniversary of their first BBC show, a six-part radio broadcast entitled On the Town with the League of Gentlemen; its success led to the first TV series two years later.

"We are thrilled to bits to be returning to Royston Vasey in celebration of our 20 years at the BBC (with time off for bad behaviour)," say the boys. "We look forward to digging up the old characters - some of them literally - and seeing how life has treated them.

"It's been great fun to write these Specials, and we've saved money on the make-up budget by kindly growing ancient ourselves. Like the sign says: You'll Never Leave."

Gatiss, Shearsmith and Pemberton met while studying drama at Bretton Hall College in West Yorkshire, and struggled to make it as actors before teaming up with Gatiss' friend Dyson and devising a stage show inspired by oddballs they had met, as well as their mutual love of classic British horror movies such as The Wicker Man, Don't Look Now and those made by Hammer.

After three TV series, a Christmas special, a film, stage show and live tours, the quartet decided to work on new projects. All three actors have worked constantly on a range of projects; Gatiss is perhaps best known for Doctor Who (he appears in this year's Christmas special) and Sherlock, while Pemberton and Shearsmith have appeared in a number of projects independently as well as together on Psychoville and Inside No 9.

Dyson has written books, been a script editor and co-created the West End hit Ghost Stories with Andy Nyman; a film version is heading our way soon.

Last year, Gatiss mentioned during an interview that perhaps when the League did come back together, they could do something with a Brexit theme, seeing as Britain had become a "local country for local people."

The League of Gentlemen, Monday, BBC2, 10pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Would I Lie to You? At Christmas BBC1, 9.30pm
Rob Brydon hosts a festive edition of the comedy panel show in which the participants aim to hoodwink their opponents with absurd facts and plausible lies about themselves in a bid to secure a team victory. Joining team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack for the Christmas fun are former Test Match Special commentator Henry Blofeld, Witless star Kerry Howard, broadcaster Reverend Richard Coles and BBC News presenter Clive Myrie. They all reveal amazing stories, but are they telling the truth, or making it all up?

TUESDAY
The Royal Variety Performance 2017 ITV, 7.30pm
Miranda Hart hosts the annual event, this time from the London Palladium Theatre in the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. The line-up includes Alfie Boe, Michael Ball, Seal and Britain's Got Talent Winner Tokio Myers. Tom Allen and the cast of Benidorm are among the acts providing the laughs. Frasier veteran Kelsey Grammer also makes an appearance with the cast of stage hit Big Fish, and there will be a chance to see routines from musicals 42nd Street and Annie.

WEDNESDAY
Judi Dench's Secret Woodland BBC1, 8pm
The name tree-hugger is often used a derogatory term aimed at those who care for the countryside. But after tuning into this documentary, you may get the impression that Judi Dench would be proud to be called such a thing. For years, she has had a deep love, respect and affection for trees, and now has a secret woodland – or private arboretum, if you prefer – at her Surrey home. It's an area she created with a fellow enthusiast, her late husband Michael Williams, and one she now tends to with her close companion, wildlife enthusiast David Mills. Filmed over the course of a year, the programme offers an insight into the impact that the changing seasons have on the area, while the Oscar-winning star learns more about how trees help the environment.

THURSDAY
Joanna & Jennifer: Absolutely Champers BBC2, 9pm
Champagne was always the tipple of choice for Absolutely Fabulous characters Patsy Stone and Edina Monsoon – and it seems it's a similar story off-screen for actresses Joanna Lumley and Jennifer Saunders, who like nothing better than sharing a glass of bubbly. Now, they're about to learn more about their favourite drink as they head to the Champagne region of North Eastern France to discover how it's made. Along the way, they visit family run vineyards, and join the seasonal workers who are dealing with this year's grape harvest. But the Ab Fab stars also discover a few things they didn't know about each other as they share a few anecdotes and stories from their lives. And that's definitely worth raising a glass too.

Al Murray's Make Christmas Great Again, Friday, ITV, 9pm

FRIDAY
Celebrity 5 Go in Search of Santa Claus Channel 5, 8.30pm
You can run but you can't hide from celebrity travelogues these days. But while some have featured stars you might not expect to pop up on docusoaps – such as Julie Walters, Timothy West, Prunella Scales and Miriam Margolyes – there are others you've kind of come to expect to take part. Some of them feature in this 90-minute documentary. Actors Christopher Biggins and Sue Holderness, comedian Joe Pasquale, musician-turned-presenter Reverend Richard Coles and cook Rustie Lee are taking an epic trip into the Arctic Circle to explore Lapland, the official home of Santa Claus. They stay in traditional cabins and lodges, indulge in the 'delights' of saunas, river dipping and whipping with hot birch twigs while on the trail of the big man with the beard.

Al Murray's Make Christmas Great Again ITV, 9pm
It's the last Friday before Christmas (known in some circles as Black or Mad Friday), which means that a lot of people will be heading to the pub to celebrate. However, if you don't fancy facing hordes of people with a little too much festive spirit, the good news is that Al Murray's Pub Landlord is back to host his own televised lock-in at The Reindeer's Head. Backed by his house band, The Remoans, he'll be leading festive sing-songs on numbers including You Can't Even Say Christmas Any More.

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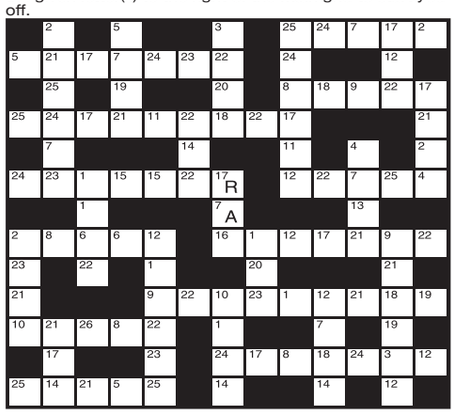
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



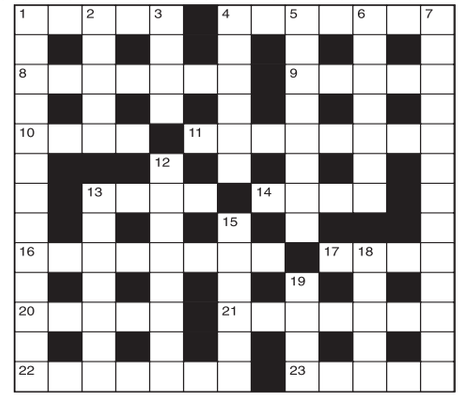
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17 R
5	18
6	19
7 A	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
T	A	Q	Z	U	Y	V	W	P	G	F	X	I
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
K	B	J	S	N	R	H	E	D	C	O	L	M

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. A game to settle the ashes? (5)
4. Film with a good finish (7)
8. In my view, a vegetable with very good stuffing (7)
9. Best substitute for shaving soap (5)
10. The last of the wine (4)
11. Keep for a lock (8)
13. It's bound to secure advance accommodation (4)
14. Thrash in the return game (4)
16. Snuggled into a new quilt, managed to remain undisturbed (8)
17. A race to make you sweat (4)
20. Keep out of sight after a number make complaints (5)
21. Stop and go after amber changes (7)
22. The girl looks different, having slimmed (7)
23. It's the herb season, we hear (5)

Down

1. New Liberal M.P. to put up a bill inside? Doubtful (13)
2. A weapon used daily by most people (5)
3. Deceiver stood up to use abusive language (4)
4. A number finish with an alternative seller (6)
5. Public deliveries (8)
6. Titanic destroyer (7)
7. It's said to be the best place to be (4,5,4)
12. A number on a search are winning (8)
13. Attitude taken by a navigator (7)
15. Passenger-ship has a slender look (6)
18. Is in good time but nearly loses a point (5)
19. Come up against an objection (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Emulate (5)
4. Amuses (7)
8. Idiotic (7)
9. Shelf (5)
10. Inactive (4)
11. Deep (8)
13. A volcano (4)
14. Warmth (4)
16. Records (8)
17. Separate (4)
20. Angry (5)
21. Raise (7)
22. Inherent (7)
23. Clothe (5)

Down

1. Freezing (13)
2. Essential (5)
3. Booty (4)
4. Abandon (6)
5. Traduced (8)
6. Fortification (7)
7. Resolution (13)
12. Contrive (8)
13. Charm (7)
15. Disclose (6)
18. Lessen (5)
19. Despatch (4)

Sudoku

	2				3			
			6	8				9
9		8	5				4	2
5			3	4		7		
	4	7				1		
		9		7	6			4
6	5					9	8	1
1				2	5			
		4		6			5	

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	4	3	6	2	7	8	9	5
5	2	6	4	9	8	3	7	1
7	9	8	1	3	5	4	6	2
4	8	2	5	6	1	9	3	7
6	5	9	2	7	3	1	8	4
3	7	1	9	8	4	2	5	6
8	6	7	3	1	2	5	4	9
9	1	4	8	5	6	7	2	3
2	3	5	7	4	9	6	1	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 3 Billiards; 8 Uses; 9 Capricorn; 10 Prison; 11 Horse; 14 Charm; 15 Trim; 16 Amass; 18 Owed; 20 Track; 21 Solid; 24 Tender; 25 Frightful; 26 Coin; 27 Murderess.
Down: 1 Suspicion; 2 Meditates; 4 Iran; 5 Largo; 6 Accost; 7 Dora; 9 Comma; 11 Hoard; 12 Errand boy; 13 Smoke ring; 17 Steel; 19 Dogged; 22 Inter; 23 Frau; 24 Tugs.
QUICK - Across: 3 Promenade; 8 Etch; 9 Attribute; 10 Elapse; 11 Dealt; 14 Those; 15 Each; 16 Realm; 18 Roam; 20 Enter; 21 Loyal; 24 Beacon; 25 Palatable; 26 Bass; 27 Personnel.
Down: 1 Sedentary; 2 Octagonal; 4 Rite; 5 Merge; 6 Nubile; 7 Duty; 9 Aster; 11 Drawl; 12 Tactician; 13 Sharpness; 17 Melee; 19 Morass; 22 Again; 23 Vase; 24 Blue.

Quiz

1. Which English king made the Homburg fashionable?
2. As which bird is the Holy Spirit usually depicted?
3. To which mountain range does Ben Nevis belong?
4. Which war was ended by the Treaty of Paris in 1856?
5. What is a monkey puzzle?
6. What was Walter Lantz's most famous flying cartoon creation?
7. Which singer-songwriter was born Robert Zimmerman?
8. In which city is the Bridge of Brotherhood and Unity?
9. Who wrote The Doll's House?
10. What is the brightest star in the constellation Lyra?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Carmen; 2 Arthur Miller; 3 New York; 4 Force; 5 Costa Rica; 6 Id est; 7 Tarragon; 8 Montana; 9 Dolphin; 10 Socrates.

Niner: HARMONIES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

17235 gives a criminal,
31175678 gives a second criminal,
494878 gives a money lender.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Mermaid meal went swimmingly

IT'S long been THE place to go. When we first moved to the area – three decades ago – we would often drive past The Mermaid at Compton and it was very rare that the car park was not full.

Looking at the pub, on the Bridgnorth Road, it is hard not to be attracted to it. In the summer months the vast covering of the beautiful wisteria is quite stunning.

But the inside is just as a much a delight.

The spacious car park and convenient location, perfectly placed for the West Midlands, Staffordshire and Shropshire area, with a canopy covered eating area outside for those warmer months.

But no fear now that the cold, dreary weather is upon us, step inside and and the decor is just as inviting. It has a warm comfortable feel matched by the service and attentiveness of the staff.

We popped in recently on a Saturday night and were lucky to get a table because its popularity has spread far and wide.

The Mermaid – just as attractive inside

Welcoming – General manager Chris Callow, with assistant manager Lizzie Johnston (right) and Emma Thomas

IMPRESSIVE

Nestled in a corner, we tucked into a delightful three-course meal.

As there were four of us we chose one sharer – my daughter and I tucked into the Box Baked Camembert while the two men had the Duo of Pate and the Salt and Pepper Calamari and, needless to say, I had a little taster of each others.

Well you have to try as many dishes as possible, it's part of the job!

What was particularly impressive was that before we ordered our son-in-law explained to the waitress that he was lactose intolerant, at which she disappeared to the kitchen and returned with a large blue file.

In it were the ingredients of all the dishes of the menu so there was no danger of him choosing something that would not suit him. No fuss, just reassurance that he could make the right choices.

For mains I went for my favourite, the Hunter's Chicken and it appears I an not alone as it is the pub's most popular dish, always on the menu no matter what the season.

My husband as usual went for the Rump Steak and my daughter for the Spicy Diablo pizza, it was so huge that she took some home to enjoy the next day. Having looking through the ingredients Duncan settled on the Fish and Chips. All very good portions and beautifully served and just enough room for pudding.

Although fairly full by then, three of us were ready to tuck in.

My husband is not really a sweets man but when he saw what was on offer he changed his mind and went for the Melba Mallow Mess.

They do a nice coffee and mini pudding for £4.95 pud which is a great idea but my daughter and I teamed up again with the sharing Pudding Tasting Platter.

Well we like to share but I think I had the lion's share. I finished mine off with a liqueur coffee – my pregnant daughter had already offered to drive. Be rude to say no.

So popular the Mermaid Christmas dinner menu is already sold out but there are still limited places for the Boxing Day meal (two courses £17.95, three courses £20.95. Call 01902 764896.

Or go to reservations opentable.co.uk

I drive past this Vintage Inn pub every day on my way to work and have always commented on how welcoming it looks. How right I was.

SUE ATTWATER

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42nd Street

New York City, 1933, and Peggy Sawyer, just off the bus from out-of-town hicksville, manages to miss the auditions for the dazzling new Broadway show but Peggy's impromptu dance routine is later spotted by the casting director, who decides to take a chance on her after all...

All the stops are pulled out as this classic tale of Broadway's Golden Age comes to London, directed and co-written by veteran Mark Bramble and featuring the showstoppers We're In The Money, Lullaby of Broadway, Shuffle Off To Buffalo, Dames, I Only Have Eyes For You and 42nd Street.

London Theatre Break

2 Days by Coach - Evening Show

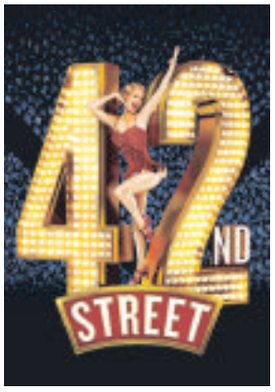
Departing Thursday 1 Mar

from Dudley, Halesowen & Stourbridge

Price Includes...

- ✔ Return coach travel
- ✔ 1 night B&B at a selected hotel, Heathrow area
- ✔ 42nd Street theatre ticket (evening performance)
- ✔ Free time in London

2 Days by Coach only **£99**



★★★★★
"The mother of all show-biz musicals"
The Daily Telegraph

Les Misérables

'Les Miz', as it is affectionately known, is now the world's longest-running musical, with 100 international awards, including 8 Tonys, 5 Drama Desk and 2 Olivier Awards, for Best Musical, Best Score, Outstanding Music, Best Director, Best Design and a clutch of Best Actor gongs. The musical has been seen by 65 million people in 42 countries and translated into 22 languages.

Set against the backdrop of a nation in the grip of revolutionary turmoil, it is arguably the world's most popular musical. The magnificent score includes the songs One Day More, I Dreamed A Dream and many more.

London Theatre Break

2 Days by Coach - Evening Show

Departing Thursday 1 Mar

from Dudley, Halesowen & Stourbridge

Price Includes...

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- ✔ 1 night B&B at a selected hotel, Heathrow area
- ✔ Les Misérables theatre ticket (evening performance)
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In most cases, tickets will be for seats located in middle/upper tiers of the venue which may require the negotiation of steps/stairs, which may be unsuitable for those with limited mobility. While most venues have lift access, these may not serve all seating areas. Tours offered subject to availability. Errors and omissions excepted. Prices shown are per person, based on two people sharing a dbl/twin room. Single supplements apply.

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Period residence is well presented and improved

Beautifully presented and successfully improved, this four-bedroomed period semi-detached family home in Beale Street, Old Quarter, Stourbridge, is for sale through Taylors at £295,000 with no chain.

With gas central heating and double glazing its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a pleasant sitting room, a large separate dining room, a cellar, a Shaker-style kitchen, a utility, central hall, four good bedrooms and a modern white bathroom. It also has a splendid rear garden.

The pleasant sitting room has a delightful box bay window with shutters, a feature natural wood fire surround with an inset cast iron relief and ornate tiling, projecting hearth together with a grate with a 'coal-effect' gas fire and oak-style panel flooring. The dining room has a feature fireplace. Contact Taylors on 01384 395555 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk

STOURBRIDGE £295,000

KEY FEATURES

- Shaker-style kitchen
- Splendid rear garden
- Box bay window

Taylors

the property professionals

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Also at Stourbridge and Halesowen

TREMENDOUS 2017 FOR SEDGLEY OFFICE!

Looking back over the 11 months from January through to early December Sedgley office agreed sales of 23% more properties by contrast to the same period in 2016.

National data suggests the West Midlands as a region is experiencing the second highest percentage increase in prices throughout the UK. Here at Sedgley we have every confidence the local market will continue to improve well into Spring 2018.

LOWER GORNAL, The Straits

ENLARGED, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached two/three bedroom within walking distance of many amenities comprising; porch, hall, bedroom with wardrobes, study (occasional third bedroom), refitted dining kitchen with 'high gloss white' finish units, utility, bathroom, second bedroom, inner vestibule, dressing room with fine range of units, shower/wet room, LARGE GARAGE, garden. EPC:E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £237,950

DUDLEY, Lauriston Close, Earls Keep

NO UPWARD CHAIN - STYLISH, gas centrally heated double glazed detached situated at head of cul-de-sac upon favoured development comprising; entrance hallway, through lounge/dining room, upgraded kitchen (integrated appliances), pantry, utility room, fitted cloakroom. Principal bedroom with shower room en suite, two further bedrooms (both with wardrobes), bathroom, Garage, garden. EPC: TBC SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £210,000

SEDGLEY, Turls Hill Road

SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDED, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached within walking distance of fields & Sedgley's Bull Ring. comprising; porch, hall, through living/dining room with conservatory beyond. Extended kitchen, conservatory to side, w.c. Three bedrooms, bathroom. LARGE CORNER PLOT with side gated access to CONTRACTORS GARAGE (with pit), parking, garden. EPC.D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £180,000

COSELEY, Lansdowne Close, Bramford estate

CLEAR (WITHIN 20 METRES) MINING SEARCH! Well presented semi-detached property located on sought after BRAMFORD ESTATE. Benefiting from gas central heating & double glazing, this EXTENDED family home comprises; hallway, living room, extended dining room, kitchen, utility, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, garden, driveway to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC:D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £174,950

WOODSETTON, Windmill View

NO UPWARD CHAIN -SPACIOUS, conscientiously maintained, gas centrally heated (recent combi boiler) & double glazed semi detached with further potential at head of quiet/safe cul-de-sac in popular district comprising; porch, hall, separate dining room, lounge, kitchen, pantry, lobby, separate toilet and boiler room. Three generous bedrooms, 'wet room' (former bathroom) separate toilet. gardens. EPC:TBC SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £129,950

DUDLEY, Old Park Road

NOTICE OF OFFER - We advise that an offer has been made for the property 58 Old Park Road. Dudley, DY1 3NB in the sum of £127,700. Any persons wishing to increase on this offer should notify the agents of their best offer prior to exchange of contracts.
EXTENDED UPVC double glazed gas centrally heated (not tested) for improvement offering potential; EPC: D. SEDGLEY OFFICE

UPPER GORNAL, Priors Mill

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Refurbished, gas centrally heated, single glazed intermediate 'starter home' that has been redecorated throughout convenient for many amenities & appealing to first time buyers etc. comprising;hall, lounge, dining kitchen with a range of 'walnut' effect units & integrated oven and hob. Two bedrooms, bathroom. Gardens with views. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £115,000

COSELEY, Birmingham New Road

A comparatively spacious UPVC double glazed three bedroom semi detached for modernisation with no upward chain. Entrance porch, reception hall, lounge, transverse dining kitchen, utility room, three bedrooms, bathroom, garage, delightful secluded rear garden. Mining search available. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £100,000

Well-presented apartment in a fantastic popular position

OLDBURY
£425 PCM <<<

This first floor one-bedroomed apartment in St Michaels Mews, Oldbury, is available to rent through loveyourpostcode.com at £425 per calender month.

This is a lovely apartment in a fantastic location.

It is accessed via a secure entrance and intercom system, before taking two flights of stairs.

It has an entrance hallway, a master bedroom which is roomy and has views overlooking the communal parking area and laminate flooring.

Opposite the bedroom is the family bathroom with a modern suite.

The final area of this apartment is the combined living and kitchen area.

Contact loveyourpostcode.com on 0800 862 0870.

First floor flat is an ideal first time buy

TIPTON
£65,000

A well presented one-bedroomed first floor apartment, 28 Avern Close, Tipton, is an ideal first-time buy or investment property.

On a popular estate, it is for sale through Skitts Estate Agents now at £65,000.

The accommodation briefly comprises a lounge, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and it also has an allocated parking space.

There is a door into the communal entrance with a telephone intercom system, stairs to the first floor and a door into a hallway with two storage cupboards.

The lounge has an archway into an inner hall.

Call 0121 520 2255.

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CGI of The Sherwood 3 bedroom home at Woodlands. Photographs of typical Kier Living showhome interiors. Elevations and finishes may vary. *Available on selected plots reserved by 22nd December 2017, subject to terms and conditions. Carpets only available on plot 172. **Help to buy available upon request subject to terms and conditions.

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, December 14, 2017

Delegates can experience AEB systems

Driving for better business with VW

Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, which in June became the first van manufacturer to fit autonomous emergency braking (AEB) systems as standard to all its vans, has teamed up with Driving for Better Business to support a series of events designed to demonstrate the benefits of crash avoidance technology to fleets.

Driving is the most dangerous activity most employees ever undertake – statistically more than coal mining! There are hundreds of thousands of injuries on the roads every year as well as millions of collisions that result in expensive damage to vehicles and property, and prevent businesses functioning effectively. Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) are proven to reduce collisions and costs, yet take up of these systems – on cars as well as commercial vehicles – in the UK is poor. One barrier is a lack of customer knowledge about what systems are available, how they work, as well as the benefits ADAS can bring to a fleet.

Driving for Better Business is a long-term campaign which works in association with Highways England and RoadSafe to raise awareness of the importance of work-related road safety in the business community and public sector by using advocates drawn from these communities to promote the business benefits of managing it effectively.

Effective

Head of marketing at Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, Sarah Cox, said: "When we took the decision earlier this year to give our customers safety as standard by fitting AEB to all our vans, we knew it was the right thing to do: it would keep drivers safe, vehicles on the road and reduce costs.

"Teaming up with Driving for Better Business gives us the opportunity to show fleet managers how the technology really works. A description or video is a good start, but when you experience how ADAS works from the driving seat or in front of your eyes, it brings home how effective the systems are."

Campaign director at Driving for Better Business, Simon Turner, added: "We're delighted that Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles is supporting our events. We conducted research earlier this year that found a significant barrier to many fleets specifying AEB is that it is often an extra cost option which falls outside their procurement policy. I applaud Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles for such a bold and industry-leading move and hope other manufacturers follow its example. Working together with our other partners, we can show fleet managers the technologies in action in a controlled environment, and in the care of highly trained instructors and engineers. This is a unique opportunity to see how these new technologies and systems work, and experience how they interact with the driver and the car's other control systems."

The first two events were fully subscribed, with delegates not only learning about the variety of systems available and experiencing ADAS in action, but also understanding the business case for these technologies and their impact on repair costs. A further two will be held on March 20 and 21, 2018 at Thatcham Research's Upper Heyford Proving Ground in Oxfordshire. For details and to reserve your place, visit www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/stopthecrash

Earlier this year, Volkswagen became the first commercial vehicle brand to fit all its vans with AEB (Front Assist with City Emergency Braking), meaning all customers buying a new Caddy, Transporter or Crafter are guaranteed safety as standard. According to Thatcham, AEB systems are 'probably the most significant development in vehicle safety since the seat belt' and have the potential to save more than 1000 lives and 120,000 casualties over the next ten years.

You learn about a variety of safety systems available

Second generation safety sense package due in 2018

For advanced vehicle safety systems to realise best potential to reduce the number of traffic accidents and fatalities, they need to be operating on large numbers of vehicles.

That's why in 2015 Toyota decided to launch the democratisation of these technologies in its cars with Toyota Safety Sense, a set of active safety features designed to help prevent or mitigate the consequences of collisions across a wide range of traffic situations.

By making Toyota Safety Sense a standard feature or an affordable option on large numbers of its cars, Toyota helps larger numbers of motorists – and other road users – to benefit from the safeguards it can provide. The package includes a Pre-Collision System (PCS), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), Road Sign Assist (RSA) and Automatic High Beam (AHB). Vehicles equipped with a millimetre-wave radar further benefit from Adaptive Cruise control and PCS with a pedestrian detection function.

More than five million Toyotas worldwide are now using Toyota Safety Sense; in Europe, 92 per cent of new cars are fitted with the technology. Studies in Japan reveal that in real-world traffic conditions there has been an approximate 50 per cent reduction in rear-end collisions – and a decrease of around 90 per cent where Toyota Safety Sense operates in combination with an Intelligent Clearance Sonar (ICS).

Safe mobility

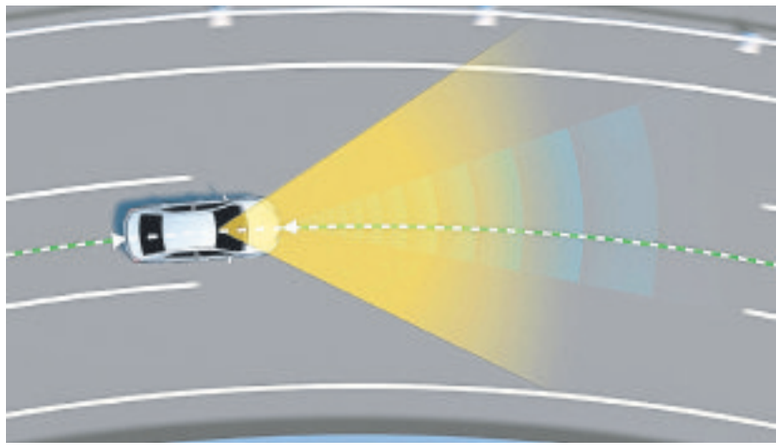
Toyota is committed to achieving a safe mobility society and believes it is important to take an approach that involves people, vehicles and the traffic environment, as well as pursuing real-world safety by learning from accidents and incorporating that knowledge in its vehicle development.

True to the company's Kaizen philosophy of continuous improvement, Toyota is introducing the second generation Toyota Safety Sense. This comes with an improved system unit, an upgraded PCS function and new Lane Tracing Assist (LTA), while retaining the established ACC, RSA and AHB functions. Vehicles will use a single-lens camera and millimetre – wave radar with higher performance, increasing the scope of hazard detection and improving functionality.

Between speeds of approximately six and 112mph, the upgraded Pre-Collision System will detect vehicles ahead and reduce the risk of hitting them from the back. The system can also detect potential collisions with pedestrians (in day and night-time driving) and cyclists (during daylight hours), with automated braking operating at relative speeds between six and 50mph.

The new Lane Tracing Assist keeps the vehicle centred in its highway lane by helping the driver with steering control, when the Adaptive Cruise Control is operating. LTA also comes with an upgraded Lane Departure Alert which can recognise the margins of straight roads, even when white line markings are not used. Should the vehicle deviate from its lane, the system will sound a warning and provided assistance for the driver to steer the car back to its correct course.

The second generation Toyota Safety Sense will be progressively rolled out from the start of 2018.



Toyota Safety Sense operates in combination with an Intelligent Clearance Sonar (ICS)

The upgraded Pre-Collision System will detect obstacles ahead and reduce the risk of hitting them

Think twice before using hands-free devices

Police are urging motorists to "think twice" following the conviction of a woman for causing death by dangerous driving while she was talking hands-free on a mobile phone.

Samantha Ayres, 34, of West Street, Horncastle, Lincs., collided head-on with a motorcycle while she was in the middle of a hands-free call. The rider, 26-year-old David Kirk, from Lincoln, died at the scene.

Lincolnshire Police temporary inspector of the serious collision investigation unit Ewan Gell told the Press Association: "Anything that distracts you from that singular act of driving, you should put it away to one side and think 'I'm not going to do that until I've finished what I'm doing'."

He added: "If you want to talk to somebody, want to use a mobile device or mess about with your music – in fact, anything that distracts you from doing the task in hand of driving – you should think twice about.

"We will investigate every single aspect of a crash and if that turns up, as it did in this case, evidence of a prolonged conversation and you can link that to the cause of the crash, that's when a lot of people are going to have a problem."

It was revealed that Ayres, a teaching assistant, had drifted across on to the other side of Baumber Road, Horsington, when the crash happened. She had been on a phone call for 27 minutes.

She was found guilty on November 29, 2017, of causing death by dangerous driving, and was sentenced today at Lincolnshire Crown Court to three years in prison. She was also handed a four-and-a-half-year disqualification from driving.

Ayres denied prosecution claims of distracted driving, saying hitting a pothole or rut had caused her to lose control of her Ford Fiesta – although investigators found no evidence of this.

A statement from Mr Kirk's family read: "The 7th of November 2016 changed so many lives. We lost a wonderful man, a loving husband, son, brother and the most caring father [David's daughter] Alyssa could have wished for. People say time heals, but we all wake up every morning with the same pain we felt the day it happened, hoping it was a horrible nightmare and then having to go through another day without seeing David's cheeky smile or hearing his voice.

"Time does not heal – we as a family are just learning how to hide our true emotions and the heartache this has caused."

At sentencing, Judge John Pini QC said: "No words are adequate to describe the profound sense of shock, desolation, pain and loss that will remain with Mr Kirk's family forever.

"For him to lose his life in this way is as irrational as it is unfair. Nothing I say can turn the clock back. No sentence will ever begin to make amends for his death."

Anything that distracts you from driving should be put to one side

Dealership services now even better

Commercial feature

A long-established West Midlands car company has made a major investment, improving still further its customer facilities and extending the already comprehensive range of services it offers.

The Dudley Motor Company has spent £500,000 on its Trindle Road, Dudley, headquarters, including a state-of-the-art, air-conditioned showroom and improvements to its parts and workshop departments.

Expertise

Although primarily a Vauxhall dealership, the company offers service and maintenance facilities for all makes of cars, and has recently expanded its expertise to caring for prestige brands such as Jaguar, Land Rover, Range Rover, Audi and BMW.

As a main dealer, Dudley Motor Company has all the latest diagnostic equipment plus the ability to offer valeting, delivery and collection services for customers having their cars serviced.

"Our prices are competitive, so we are able to compete with the independents," service manager Dave Wagstaff said.

"We had already begun selling more prestige cars, and so had been developing more of the service and maintenance facility for them.

"Following the investment, we felt this was an avenue we could take advantage of."

All work is carried out by factory-trained technicians.

The company aims to ensure that the service customers receive exceeds their best expectations. That is confirmed by a wealth of positive feedback from customers, with praise for the company's 'great service and friendly staff', 'a reliable garage with courteous, professional and knowledgeable staff,' 'exceptional service' and 'wow what an amazing experience.'

Fixed price servicing and service plans are available.

Dudley Motor Company has a loyal and stable workforce, who take a pride in the company and its services. Next year it will be celebrating 20 years on its site in Trindle Road.

Its philosophy of 'if you put customers first they will do the same for you' has stood the test of time and is epitomised by the latest £500,000 investment.

It is one of seven dealerships in a multi-franchise company serving motorists in the West Midlands and the Black Country which has been a part of the local community since 1953.

Recognised

As such, maintaining the highest standards is a way of life for the staff. It was officially recognised by Vauxhall with an award for one of the best performing dealerships in the Midlands.

- Dudley Motor Company is open from 8am to 6pm on weekdays, and from 8am to 12.30pm on Satudays, with customers normally able to obtain an appointment within a couple of days.
- It also offers an MoT test service for both cars and vans, as well as sales of new and used vehicles including the full range of Vauxhall models.

Service manager Dave Wagstaff

Improvements all-round

The £500,000 million investment includes a state-of-the-art air-conditioned showroom

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, December 14, 2017

New Ford EcoSport offers more style, comfort, capability and choice

New SUV enhances quality, technology and capability

The new Ford EcoSport compact sports utility vehicle (SUV) delivers enhanced versatility and capability, more refined styling and sophisticated technologies for customers in Europe.

The new Ford EcoSport for the first time offers Ford Intelligent All Wheel Drive technology for improved traction on- and off-road, combined with an advanced new 1.5-litre EcoBlue diesel engine, delivering up to 125 PS and optimised CO2 emissions.

Also available for the first time as a sporty, Ford Performance-inspired EcoSport ST-Line model, the new Ford EcoSport delivers driver assistance technologies including SYNC 3 connectivity, Cruise Control with Adjustable Speed Limiter and Rear View Camera.

Featuring enhanced dynamic, rugged and refined exterior styling, the new model is offered in 12 bold colours and offers even more personalisation options – including contrasting painted roof colour options that extend to the window pillars, upper door frames, rear roof spoiler and door mirrors. A user-centric, upscale new interior offers a superior occupant experience with floating central 8-inch touchscreen, heated steering wheel and smart stowage solutions including an adjustable boot floor.

Blending rugged SUV functionality with practicality

"Ford has sold more than 166,000 EcoSport compact SUVs in Europe since we first introduced the model to the region in 2014, and last year sales grew 40 per cent," said Steven Armstrong, group vice president and president, Europe Middle East and Africa, Ford Motor Company. "The new Ford EcoSport offers customers even more style, comfort, capability and choice – blending rugged SUV functionality with city car practicality."

The SUV segment is the fastest growing in Europe. Registrations of SUV models grew by more than 21 per cent year-on-year to account for more than one quarter of all new passenger car registrations in 2016. Last year, Ford's SUV sales in Europe grew by more than 30 per cent. In the UK, over 40,000 EcoSports have been sold since its original introduction in 2013, with the Titanium model reaching 70 per cent of sales.

The new Ford EcoSport will deliver an optimised driving experience equipped with Ford Intelligent All Wheel Drive from mid-2018. The technology will be offered in combination with the all-new 1.5-litre Ford EcoBlue diesel engine and a six-speed manual gearbox, delivering 125 PS and 300 Nm of torque.

Intelligent All Wheel Drive measures how the car's wheels are gripping the road surface and can adjust torque delivery up to 50/50 between the front and rear wheels in under 20 milliseconds – twenty times quicker than it takes to blink. The system seamlessly transitions torque between all four wheels and provides a more secure footing on the road especially in slippery conditions.

The new Ford EcoSport features bold, dynamic Ford SUV styling, reflecting that the Kuga and Edge. EcoSport now also delivers a new level of interior refinement which includes easier to use controls and soft-touch materials, and a new centre console ergonomically designed for easy operation and featuring fewer buttons.

The new EcoSport line-up will for the first time include the sporty new EcoSport ST-Line variant, joining the Edge ST-Line, Fiesta ST-Line, Focus ST-Line, Kuga ST-Line, Mondeo ST-Line and S-MAX ST-Line models that offer bold styling and sports-tuned driving dynamics alongside powerful and efficient EcoBoost petrol and TDCi diesel engines.

Ford's sophisticated SYNC 3 communications and entertainment system is compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto™. SYNC 3 is supported by EcoSport's floating, 8-inch colour touchscreen, which can be operated with pinch and swipe gestures. Also offered with SYNC 3 is a floating 6.5-inch colour touchscreen. A 4.2-inch colour screen is offered in combination with Bluetooth connectivity and two USB inputs.

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WANTED
VINTAGE TAMIYA REMOTE CONTROL MODELS
Also any old radio controlled models in any condition, Mardave, Kyocho, Traxxas, HPi Team Associated, Schumacher
Big or small collections bought.
07568 585075 or 0121 532 2544.

Items For Sale

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

ITEMS FOR SALE
Mini Moto Motorbike £50.
Four Builders Trestles £40
Pipe bender Rothenberger £30
Mitre guillotine £25.
01384 635233/07895 141564.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

Loans

READERS ARE REMINDED that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

specialists at your service

Appliance Repairs

A SAME DAY REPAIR - Cookers Autos Fridges Vacs and Micros. Call 07900 578897 /07801 746853.

Alarms/Security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £249
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

Aerials

AA DIGITAL AERIALS
AERIALS FITTED FROM £79.99
01902 858191 • 01384 429166
01543 439095 • 01922 716029

CLASSIFIEDS BOOSTS BUSINESS!

"I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract"
Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by **Express & Star**

A AERIAL AND SKY SPECIALIST Digital aerials, CCTV cameras, TV wall mount fitted. 07850 330251.

CLEAR VISION AERIALS Freeview, FreeSat, Sky, CCTV. Aerials from £79. Dishes from £79. OAP DISCOUNT. Tel: 01902 752036.

ALAN JONES
THE ORIGINAL AERIAL SPECIALIST, THE BEST!
Est 1955 - 59 years at the top!
Recommended by thousands
Genuine, honest, 100% reliable
WE HAVE WATCHED THEM ALL COME AND GO
Call: 01902 885985
ANY PROBLEM SOLVED

Bathrooms

CHANGING ROOMS
IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING YOUR HOME
Bathrooms • Kitchens • Home Improvements
Is bathing becoming difficult?
Let us make life easier
Easy Access/ Wet Room Specialists
Show Room at 47A Kent Street, Dudley
01902 670426

Domestic Cleaning

CLEAN FOR YOU (midlands ltd)
Domestic Cleaning & Ironing Service.
Friendly, Reliable & Trustworthy.
Call Anita on: 07854 163 804.

Domestic Repairs & Services

SAME DAY Low Cost Repairs. Washers, Dryers Electric Cookers. 12 mths guarantee. 07850 355552.

Drain Clearance

ALL DRAIN AND SEWER Blockages cleared fast. Call Fast Clean: 01902 736424.

Driveways & Patios

CRETE BY DESIGN
Concrete Imprinting
* BLOCK PAVING * TARMACING
* RESIN DRIVES FREE QUOTES
01902 489633 (day)
or 01902 604187 (eve)

CLASSIFIEDS WORK!!!

WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SAY!...

"For over 30 years we have used Express & Star classified adverts which has resulted in many happy caravan owners!"
Hillandale Caravans

"I average around 10 phone calls a week from customers as a direct result of my Classified Advertising. I am very happy with my response levels. "
Mr Causer.

"We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates. "
Black Country Homes

"Wednesfield Carpentry & Gates are really pleased with their classified contract advertising response."
John - Wednesfield Carpentry & Gates.

"I am extremely happy with the Service get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representative and I would recommend them to anyone!"
Michael - Portway Fencing

Call **01902 319 191**

Brought to you by **Express & Star**

Electricians

Express & Star

ELECTRICIANS!

CLAIM YOUR FREE ADVERT

(T&Cs Apply)

Call Claire Smith: 01902 319661
claire.smith@expressandstar.co.uk

Electrical Services

A BARGAIN REWIRE, fuseboards, cctv, alarms, showers, NICEIC. 01902 842739 / 07783 471949.

ALL ELECTRICAL work from a switch to a rewire. Insured, free quote 01902 575570 / 07958 627434.

ALL HOME ELECTRICS NAPIT registered. Fully insured. For a free quote call 07583 320318.

Fencing

ACE FENCING. A better quality panel. Supply/fit. Free quote: 31 Bank St. WV10 9DU.01902 723910

CLASSIFIEDS BOOSTS BUSINESS!

"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representatives and would recommend them to anyone! They have done a very professional job with my website so I get online enquiries as well now."

Michael- Portway Fencing

For great business results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

Handyman Services

YOUR LOCAL HANDYMAN
FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
CALL MIKE: 07947 621047
0121 6010479

House Clearances

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. 07852 172641 / 07710 360327

ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING CLEARED
FULL OR PART, GARAGES AND SHEDS RUBBISH REMOVED WASTE LICENCE
01384 486456 / 07711661135

Gas Fitting

A BOILER BREAKDOWN, COOKER, FIRE,
FITTED-SERVICED-REPAIRED
Landlord certs.
All areas covered.
J&E Heating.
Call John:
01902 562664
/07969 687832

Gas Fitting

GAS SERVICES
- Boilers • Cookers
- Fires • Gas Checks
- Landlord Certificates
- Gas Leaks Traced

Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/
07761 973975

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

Guttering

PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
A*1 GUTTERING
cleaned, repaired, replaced, facias/soffits, UPVC washdowns, all roofing/repointing work. Free quotes, 8am-8pm
01902 722447

Oven Cleaning

AAA OVEN CLEANING, Ovens, Hobs, Aga / Range / Micro / Extractors. 01902 689418 / 07910 921736

Painters/ Decorators

C I PAINTING & DECORATING Over 30 yrs experience.City & Guilds approved. Free Quotes. 07913 732756 or 01902 650716.

LOVE 2 WALLPAPER
Reliable & Friendly, Professional
Female Painters & Decorators
Attention to detail, competitive prices.
For the Perfect Finish with minimum hassle.
Plastering & Coving Work Undertaken
01384 287577 or 07812 484194
www.love-2-wallpaper.co.uk

CALL M & B DECORATORS
City & Guilds
No job too small
Free Quote
01902 494555

Plans Prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

BUILDING Plans: Prepared/submitted. K J Bradley 01902 373248 07792 165767. www.plans4u.co.uk

Plastering

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken, All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

Plumbers

G M PLUMBING SERVICES Complete Bathrooms, Kitchens, Taps Showers,Blockages 07976 012468

Plumbing & Heating

Keiron Jones Plumbing & Heating
Full heating systems £2200
Boiler Changes £1100
Longer warranty available upon request, fires and surrounds also available.
For Free Quotes Call:
01902 403823 07811 855231

Removals

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

KINGSWINFORD REMOVALS AND HOUSE CLEARANCES
We move anything.
Professional service,
45 years' experience,
DFS approved and we take the stress away.
Please call:
07966 281957

A CHEAPER REMOVAL
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL REMOVALS.
FULLY INSURED. 7 days.
01902 89 49 16
07807 77 30 35
FREE QUOTES
Student/OAP Discounts

Roofing

WH ROOFING CONTRACTORS
A backed bargain, slate, tile, flat, lead work, fascias and gutterwork, Free Quotes
Call: 01902 561434 or
07792 817062
E:whroofingcontractor@mail.com

COMPTON ROOFING
Tiled, Slate, Flat. New and Repairs
Ridge/Hip and Verges Re-bedded.
Chimney rebuilding/repointing.
Dry ridge and hip systems
07976 419915, 01902 448032

25% OFF SF ROOFING & GUTTERING
25 YEARS EXPERIENCE!
Flat, Main roofs, rubber or felt, repaired and replaced, all repointing. Guttering repaired and replaced.
BEAT ALL QUOTES GUARANTEED
Call Sean 01902 829158 8am to 8pm

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

Rubbish Removal

LETS TALK RUBBISH No Skips Needed.Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

Skip Hire

AN ABSOLUTE AFFORDABLE
CASTLE SKIP HIRE
Mini, midi and large skips
GRAB HIRE AND MINI DIGGER AVAILABLE
01384 237577
01902 405745
07719 671845

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service, 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR, Est 40 years, 01384 232359.

Grinsells Skip Hire LTD
Mini, Midi, Maxi, Large Skips.
Monday to Friday.
Saturday half day.
0121 555 6060

AT M&M SKIPS
Fast, friendly service
All areas covered
All sizes
Same day service
Freephone
0800 619 0189 / 07904 915016

STONES SKIP HIRE
0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875
www.stonesskiphire.co.uk

BUY LOCAL SELL LOCAL
01902 317878
ClassifiedAds

Tiling

BOBS HOME INTERIORS
Wall and floor Tiling
Bathrooms Fitted
FREE ESTIMATES
bob2granger@gmail.com
07480 141537
www.bobshomeinteriors.co.uk

Upholstery

CLASSIFIEDS BOOSTS BUSINESS!

"I am very happy with my Express & Star and Chronicles Advertising Campaign, also by using the local directory on expressandstar.com we are seeing benefits from visitors to our website."

Gary Downes - Bilston Upholstery

For great business results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

t.v. / home entertainment

Service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs. Digital aerials, sky, CCTV cameras. TV wall mounts and TV set ups. 07850 330251.

4 Pets & Animals

Pets Corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

BICHON FRISE puppies, boys, ready Dec 15, flead, wormed, chipped. £550. 07776 312117.

CHRISTMAS TREE STAR APPEAL
Have you got or did have a much loved pet to share your Christmas with, if so would you like to help our rescue dogs this Christmas by putting a star on our tree.
We will put his / her name on the star for small sum of £2.
All donations will help our rescue dogs find a new and loving home.
Animal Samaritans / Border Collie Rescue, Round House Horderley, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 8HT.
01588 676106 or text ASMT44£2 to 70070.

FRENCH BULLDOG Merl puppies, looking for their forever homes, £1,200. Telephone 07954 751602.

GOLDEN LABRADOR Pedigree puppies, dogs and bitches available. £300. 07938 598881.

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and microchipped.
Call 01902 291080 or visit
www.gtwolverhampton.co.uk
Greyhound Trust Wolverhampton
@gtwolverhampton

WANTED Aviary birds for large private aviary. Also pigeons and poultry for beginner and parrot for house pet. 07970 485491.

YORKSHIRE TERRIER Pup, nine weeks old, Mother and Father can be seen. £450. 07920 805120.

5 Business & Farming

Accountants

ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES for Small Business. Competitive Rates. Call 01902 882600

Commercial Premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

LARGE SELF CONTAINED studio flat, CH, laundry, car park. Tettenhall Road. 01902 334081.

Overseas Property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

7 Jobs

Courses

DRIVER C.P.C TRAINING either Telford or our Wednesbury office £39.99 +upload fee. Please contact Ian Jones 07950159094

Office & Secretarial

A WELL ORGANISED PERSON
with good attention to detail and communication skills required to fill an administrative position for a well-established, successful nationwide company. The role will include cash allocation, sales invoicing, and filing and also provide Purchase Ledger cover; processing goods received notes and purchase invoices and other general office duties. Experience preferred but full training will be given. The position is full time 37.5 hours per week.
Please send C.V. and covering letter to mike.warmer@dalziel.co.uk

Full Time General

King Charles I School
Comberton Road
Kidderminster DY10 1XA
Tel: 01562 512880

LETTINGS CARETAKER (WEEKEND)

We are seeking to appoint a weekend 'lettings caretaker' to join our busy site team. The post includes preparing and monitoring premises during lettings, locking the two sites after lettings have finished and general caretaker duties. The post is permanent, full time and with a variable hours contract between 10-18 hours per week. Salary Scale 3 (point range 14-17).

King Charles I School is a well-resourced 11-18 school with a sixth form. Our students are enthusiastic, talented and keen to succeed. If you are too, we would like to hear from you.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure via the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Further information and an application form are available on the school website (www.kingcharles1.worcs.sch.uk). The completed form should be emailed or posted to the school by 10.00am on Monday 18th December 2017. We intend to interview on Monday 8th January 2018.

KING CHARLES I SCHOOL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

8 Motoring

Cars Under £1500

AUTOMATIC

DIAHATSU (TOYOTA) SIRION 1000CC AUTOMATIC
2000, 5-dr hatchback, pensioners car in excellent condition, any test.
£1,150 ono
Wolverhampton
07800 637961.

FORD FIESTA 2002, 85,000 Miles, Black, central locking. Excellent runner needing welding to pass MoT. £200 ono 07931797842

LOW MILEAGE

FORD FIESTA FINESSE
2000, 1299cc, petrol, 40,190 miles, 3½ months MoT, one prior owner, good condition,
£350.
01902 758966.

JAGUAR X TYPE 2.5 2001. 97,000 miles. Silver. £700.
JAGUAR S TYPE 2.5 2003 51,000 miles. Immaculate, Beige, full leather. **£1,500. Both Automatic.**
01902 739188.

BARGAIN

SKODA FELICIA ESTATE
W reg., 73,000 miles, 4 months Mot, sunroof, new battery and exhaust. Good tyres, good run about.
Only £275 ono
07972 169554.

THIS COULD BE YOURS

VAUXHALL CORSA ACTIVE
1.2, 3-dr, 53 reg, silver, 85,000 miles, service history, previous MoT's, previous lady owner, 12 months MoT, Excellent condition.
Only £795.
07596 223665.

SELL IT FAST SELL IT LOCAL
01902 317878
ClassifiedAds

Cars Under £1500

ESTATE

VW PASSAT ESTATE TDi
54 reg., silver, diesel, 101,900 miles, 11 months MoT, FSH, alloys, winter pack, 6 disc CD,
£1,250
Stourbridge 07810 528546.

Cars Over £1500

FORD FOCUS TITANIUM
2008. Metallic black, 1.8. Diesel, automatic lights and wipers, Sony Bluetooth audio hands free system. 96,000 miles. Good condition.
£1,700 ono.
07976 979507.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

HYUNDAI AMICA Si 1.0
5dr hatchback, X Reg, 2000, yellow, petrol, manual, MoT June 2018, 64,485 miles, good condition, very economical.
£650 o.n.o.
07754 263732/01562 243346

MUST BE SEEN

HYUNDAI GETZ CDX
2005, silver, 1300cc,
petrol, 5dr hatchback,
40,000 miles, electric sunroof,
£1,600 o.n.o.
07798 687756

4X4

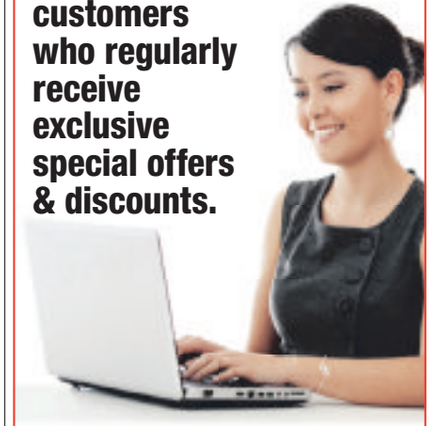
LANDROVER DEFENDER TD5
2003 in good condition, MoT June 2018, no problems, excellent motor.
£10,000
07766 235306.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

PEUGEOT 207 ACCESS
1.4, hatchback, 2012, one careful owner from new, 32,000 miles, FSH, 12 months MoT, silver / grey.
£3,500.
07757 736435.

BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENTS OR FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLINE AT
bookanad.
expressandstar.co.uk

and become one of hundreds of customers who regularly receive exclusive special offers & discounts.



ClassifiedAds

RENAULT CLIO DYNAMIQUE

2008, 51,000 Miles,diesel £30 a year tax electric mirrors, air con, long MoT, central locking, pas, CD, very good condition.

£1,999

07879 403302

RENAULT TWINGO PZAZ

2011, 17,400 Miles, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, fsh, MoT, central locking, pas, CD, very good condition.

£1,999

07879 403302

VOLVO S40

2007, 57 plate, 30,100 miles, silver, EW, AC, MoT July 2018, automatic, CL, CC.

Geuine reason for sale.

£3,500.

07538 651604.

VW GOLF MATCH

2014, 14,300 miles, 1.6 diesel, red, 5 door, parking sensors, alloys, lady owner. very economical.

Exceptional condition inside and out.

£9,950

07772 095031.

Classic Cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private cash buyer. Any condition, anything considered.
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

Commercial Vehicles

VAUXHALL COMBO 2000CDTi 1.3 VAN

2006 (06), white, side loading door, plylined, roof racks, stereo / CD, MoT May 28, 2018, 100,000 miles, clean and tidy.

£795

07970 705466.

Driving Tuition

AMAZING OFFER 5 lessons £40, 10 lessons £80. £20 an hour there after. Call now 07958 051263.

Motorbikes

AEON CROSSLAND 320CC

Road legal quad bike, 2 wheel drive, automatic, year 2016, white, 2,183 miles, good condition.

£2,500 ono

07510 294326.

Scrap Vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

MCB
TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS
Tel: 01902 408176
1000's of parts available at all times
MONMORE RD. WV1 2TZ

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Oldbury Area.

A BETTER PRICE
for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.
NINE LOCKS VEHICLE DISMANTLERS LTD
Brierley Hill 01384 76566 or 70553. Evenings 75397. DY5 3JZ.

Vehicles Wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

spares & accessories

Clutches/Brakes/ Gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE
Renault Scenic, Vauxhall Zafira, Renault Clio, Ford Focus & KA and MANY MORE!!
Ring for quotes
30 yrs experience
ALL AREAS COVERED
Call Bob
01384 251328
07972 169554
anytime

Spares/Parts

WINTER SALE Thule Roof Bars and Spares. Wolves Hire 01902 746723 WV6 0LE

9 Local Information

Public Notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience youmay fax any advertising requirements to

Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@ expressandstar.co.uk

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

Personal

FREE TEXT MESSAGES from women wanting discreet ADULT FUN! Call 0121 620 2445 for full details. Discretion assured!

GENTLEMAN

Would like to meet another Gent for friendship, holidays, fun and outings.

Box Number P21027 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Angels
The largest adult superstore in the Midlands
• Adult Toys • Sexy Lingerie
Cinema Now Open
Unit 5 Frederick Street, Walsall WS2 9NE
01922 635544

LONELY WIDOWER 70'S
Own house and car.
Looking for a lady for togetherness for Christmas and perhaps beyond.
Preferably West Side of Wolverhampton.
Box Number P21029, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

STRAIGHT LADY'S EARLY 60'S
Smartly dressed, non smokers, WLTM new people for Friendship / relationship.
Radius of 5 miles of Brierley Hill.
Must be animal friendly and car driver.
Box Number P21028, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

TWO bed house, Loughborough, back garden, looking for similar exchange, with garden, anywhere in Black Country. 07986 021441

General

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA
An invention, a book, music, lyrics and need help to get your idea off the ground?
Call 07944 818083
All calls will receive a response.

IT'S FREE IT'S EASY
Advertise any item FREE up to the value of £250 go to:
www.expressandstar.com/bookanad
*T&C's apply
FreeAds

MAKE SOME EXTRA
CASH FOR CHRISTMAS
Sell your unwanted items with Classifieds
ONLY £9.99**
FOR 6 NIGHTS IN PRINT AND ONLINE IN YOUR LOCAL EXPRESS & STAR.
✔ No hidden costs
✔ Buyer collects
✔ No postage or returns
✔ Local sellers to local people
✔ It's that simple!!
Call us on 01902 317878
or book online at bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk
** Private advertisers only
No pets, livestock, property or personals
ClassifiedAds

Express & Star DATING

YOUR regional dating service, run by the dating experts who have been established since 1990. ***REAL people in YOUR region***

Try it.. You'll love it!

Dates in ***YOUR*** region

Here's how to use your dating service ...

To ***Place*** your advert call:
0844 381 5936
follow the simple instructions. You will also get ***£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT***

To ***Place*** your ad by text
Simply text **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send to **80098** **FREE** Standard Network rates apply.

To ***Reply*** to members call:
0906 500 3955
calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.
Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-it-in prompt***ly when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** by text:
Text.. **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 **hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Been left a message? ***Pickup*** your replies on:
0906 500 3957
calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

YOU can now ***Date ONLINE*** or via your mobile just visit:
http://dating.expressandstar.com

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet ***you.. visit..*** **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

AMANDA, 36yrs, attractive lady. Solvent and well educated and spoken. Feminine figure with large breasts. Hoping to meet a broad-minded gent, any age for discreet relationship. I don't mind if you are married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box: 429287**

DEBBIE 38, fit size 12, discreet, WLTM intelligent man for fun relationship with no ties. Any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429417**

YAZ, Asian lady, 32yrs, very slim and pretty. Hoping to meet a strong minded, dominant, resourceful man. Mature please 45+ **Text Only. Box: 4177148**

JULIE, attractive early 40s brunette, size 10, varied interests, WLTM male for fun times, good conversations, spoiling and maybe more. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429401**

SOPHIE, 46yrs, attractive professional lady with time on her hands. Hoping to meet a nice gent of any age, text fun, flirt, possible meeting. **Text Only. Box: 4126579**

MARGARET 42, busty chubby female WLTM Muslim men, Pakistani, Kurdish or Indian welcome, daytime/evening, no strings. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5838907**

SARAH black lady, works as a nurse. 48yrs young, hoping to meet a younger man for some fun. Let me be your couger and dress me up in my uniform. **Text Only. Box: 4166063**

SARAH 35, recently divorced, slim 5ft 7ins, pretty, seeks male up to 50yrs for meals out hopefully leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429385**

MELANIE, attractive lady, 38yrs, hoping to meet a nice chap, any age, for chats, non complicated times. Must have great soh, looks unimportant. **Text Only. Box: 4037147**

JACKIE 40, slim easygoing blonde, works too hard, needs sincere male to help liven up her free time. Looks/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429381**

I am a discreet married black lady who is hoping to meet a man of any colour for some daytime chats, maybe meet up, maybe just text to prolong the interest in our ways. **Text Only. Box 4063856**

TAMMY, sincere mature lady, easy-going animal lover. Loves travel, eating out etc. Call me if you are interested in a chat. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429333**

GEORGINA, 46yrs, sophisticated professional lady (teacher), quite firm but kind! Interested in finding out more? I am interested to chat to you so call me today. **Text Only. Box: 4151593**

PAMELA, mature presentable lady, well educated, solvent, very young at heart. Hoping to meet presentable gent. Call me. Or text if you prefer. I promise to get back to you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429329**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks no strings casual fun. I have my own house, car and am solvent. I'm busty with a firm figure. You must be open minded, age/status unimportant. **Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box: 427633**

JAN 47, once bitten twice shy! Just looking for non complicated fun times. Attractive, discreet, OHAC, you won't be disappointed. Any age/looks/status. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429453**

VALERIE, caring thoughtful lady. Attractive with GSOH. Seeking similar gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429163**

ATTRACTIVE widowed lady, 70yrs but looks much much younger. GSOH, fun loving. WLTM man 67+ for loving tender relationship. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429327**

MARIELLE, 45yrs, curvy attractive lady, likes older men. I'm married so you must be discreet. Lets meet up, and make each other smile again. Call me and lets get to know each other. **Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 426853**

LINDA, late 50s lady, promises to call you back if you text or call. She's attractive and waiting to meet you. You must be 40+ with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429325**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

RACHAEL, 44yrs, loves life, varied interests, GSOH, kind and attractive. Seeks similar male of any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429323**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

LISA, 50yrs, curvy honey blonde lady. Loves life. Hoping to meet a kind gent of any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429321**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

FEMALE 67, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals out/in, looking for male 68-75 for friendship maybe more. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5877942**

SUE, 44, country loving lady, tall, slim, looking for similar country gent to share adventures in the great outdoors with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429251**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

ELIZABETH, 45, fed up with lonely nights! Blonde blue eyed, no children/ties, WLTM someone for cosy nights in and TLC. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429221**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205**

SHARON, 48, tall slim attractive, lives alone with no ties, love romanticising and WLTM man for good times together, maybe more. Any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429125**

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. **Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 70yrs young, slim, fit and young for my age. I'm hoping to meet a kind gent, must have GSOH, age/looks unimportant. Must be smart and good company. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429039**

TINA, 58yrs, slim, passionate and kind. Loves eating out. Hoping to meet gent 55-63. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429167**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851**

JANE, 49yrs, own home, loves nature, artistic. Love to socialise. WLTM gent any age, must have GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429165**

ATTRACTIVE lady, late sixties, hoping to meet a nice chap for walking, wining dining, and much much more. Age unimportant ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429161**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979**

Single Men

MATURE, oriental female sought by easygoing male, 73, for NSA friendship. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6117412**

AMATEUR photographer, single, seeking bored broad-minded lady to have some discreet fun with a camera. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6109868**

100% genuine, good looking blue eyed guy, 40s, looking to meet a black or mixed race lady, for romance and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428913**

64 year old male, WLTM a lady between 60-75, for friendship and outings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419929**

TALL, dark, attractive Shropshire male, 57, WLTM an attractive female, for discreet daytime fun and excitement. Any age or status. Can travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429301**

COLIN, 50, kind, loving, seeks kind loving, cuddly, large lady, 45-55, for LTR, love and romance. Must like hugs, kisses, cuddles and holding hands. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6091169**

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings out etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175**

ADVENTUROUS 36 year old, slim, dark hair, has many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

STEVE, 43 years old, 5ft 7ins, slim, non-smoker, smart casual dresser would like to meet a similar lady. Age and looks unimportant. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6116902**

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SINGLE dad, tall, blonde hair, good looking, keeps fit, loves the cinema, meals out, looking for a single lady for date nights. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428163**

ATTRACTIVE male, 56, 6ft, WLTM an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109**

HI I am a single Indian male in my 50s, and would like to meet a mature female 55+ for a NSA friendship. **Text only replies. Box no: 4627019**

WALSALL male, looking for no strings adult fun, with lady of any nationality, colour or age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428773**

MALE, age 68, very active looking for lady for NSA fun. Can accommodate. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026972**

EASYGOING likeable man likes a drink at the pub, and nights in front of the telly and a cuddle, looking for lady 45-55. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6066059**

DERBY male, young 57, looking for uncared, unloved married woman looking for discreet adult fun 35-55. Txt me for a good time. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5321154**

MALE seeks affectionate, tactile, no drama, down to earth woman for nights in/out and loads of cuddles. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418695**

MALE would like to meet local female 50/60 for mutual friendship. I'm easygoing and have many interests. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5071056**

COLIN 72, from Burntwood, looking for loving lady for days out, holidays and company. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 4880436**

MALE, 20s, seeks NSA fun with female. I love a laugh, age isn't important. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6042304**

MALE 46, genuine and honest and very caring looking for a LTR with lady. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 5422168**

MALE 20s, chilled out and happy in life looking for woman to share life with. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6034839**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MIKE, male, 61, seeks black or Asian lady, any age for adult fun, maybe more. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6010228**

MALE, late 60s, N/S, retired, 5ft9, slim build, enjoys holidays abroad, weekends away, travel, meals out. Looking to meet female, N/S, who enjoys similar interests, to share good times together, for friendship and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428219**

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings out etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175**

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Fundraising boxing nights a real winner

CHARITY boxing nights in Wolverhampton have proved a real knockout with more than £2,000 being raised.

Kaos Kickboxing coach Dylan Fitzpatrick has organised the events to raise money for the Deanesley ward at New Cross Hospital. Five such events have been held so far, the latest in November, featuring 11 bouts, and more are planned next year.

Dylan began the nights in memory of his late grandmother Mary Scott, who died of cancer at the age of 91 two years ago, before she was due to be admitted to the ward. However he has since set out to raise as much as he can for the staff.

Kaos Kickboxing operates from a church hall, in Owen Road, Wolverhampton. Fight nights are staged at Jacks Bar, in Frederick Street.

The next fundraiser is on March 24. Sign up nights are on January 2 and 22. To register, or for tickets, contact kaoskickboxing@hotmail.com or call 07772 658708.

Pathway to success for handball girls

GIRLS' handball is enjoying a boom with the formation of a new club thanks to funding from Cameron Homes. The club, based at Chase Terrace Technology College in Burntwood, will provide 13-to-17-year-old girls a pathway to develop from a beginner to playing for another of the clubs Cameron support – Cannock Olympia and Sutton Coldfield-based side B73.

Nenad Popovic, the Midlands Academy manager for England Handball and former head of PE at Cardinal Griffin School, Cannock, said: "We had a good boys' handball team and girls wanted to play. They initially trained with the boys before playing themselves and they went on to win the under-16s National Schools Championships.

"Cameron have given us £45,000 over three years to develop girls handball and we now have 15 schools involved, and recently had our finals at Aldersley Stadium where 1,000 players were involved."

Cannock Olympia and B73 are expected to benefit from the new club. Anyone interested can email scoreuk@gmail.com

Sports groups open to share of cashpot

YOUNG sporting individuals and clubs can win a share of more than £600,000 in the Healthy Communities Scheme rum by Persimmon Homes.

The programme was launched in May and closes at the end of December. It is part of a national initiative to give away cash to sports groups and individuals. A host of regional prizes of £750 are up for grabs every month, with amateur sports teams and individuals aged 21 years and under eligible. The money is to be spent on sports kit, equipment, coaching or facilities.

A shortlist of 30 will be drawn up in January from all the entries nationwide. They will go forward to a national final to be determined by public vote. The winning club or individual will receive £200,000 with £50,000 each going to two runners-up.

Persimmon Homes West Midlands, which has its headquarters in Wolverhampton, has chosen individuals and clubs from its region, including Gornal Athletic Mini Minor Kickers and a Stourbridge archer.

To enter visit www.persimmonhomes.com/charity

Dave Edwards spent nearly a decade at Wolves

New chapter as Wolves old boy lives the dream

HE'S made more than 400 professional appearances and helped Wales reach the semi-finals of Euro 2016.

Now, Wolves favourite Dave Edwards has put pen to paper to document his story and road in his new book, Living My Dream.

It all began in rural Shropshire for the former Molineux midfielder, who says he was just a "farm boy" in Shrewsbury when he first kicked a ball.

Now, the 31-year-old has enjoyed a career in which he has been praised by some of the game's greats, with Real Madrid and Wales star Gareth Bale hailing his book"a great read".

All of Edwards's royalties from the book sales, released this month, will go to the Midlands-based Little Rascals Foundation.

Edwards, who recently left Wolves for Reading after nine years in the old gold and black, said: "Being a footballer is a privileged existence – it is one I have never taken for granted and one which has given me some unbelievable experiences.

Insight

"Hopefully this book will give people an insight into what it means for a farm boy from Shrewsbury to follow his dream, making it both to the Premier League and being part of a Wales squad which reached the semi-finals at their first major tournament in 58 years."

The footballer started his career in the youth set-up at Shrewsbury Town in 1996 where he made more than 100 appearances. After a season at Luton, he was snapped up by then Wolves boss Mick McCarthy in 2008.

Living My Dream is described as a "frank and fascinating story" – outlining what it took for Edwards to achieve his life's ambition.

It describes how his dedication and commitment to the game he loves has enabled him to enjoy a successful 16-year career, spanning the top five English divisions from the Conference to the Premier League.

Bale, who played with Edwards at the Euro 2016 competition in France last year, is among the footballers to back the book.

He said: "A fantastic behind-the-scenes insight of what it was like in the Welsh camp at Euro 2016. A special time and a great read."

Woven into the story of his club career, Living My Dream is also a behind-the-scenes account of Dave's brave fightback, after a serious injury in January 2016, to make the starting line-up in Wales' opening game in Bordeaux at that summer's European Championships.

He is the first player from the Welsh squad to reveal just what it was like for a player cocooned inside the team bubble at the Euros. He reveals how the Welsh players thrived on and forged an untouchable team spirit.

It tells the story of a family man, who feels fortunate and privileged to have enjoyed the career he has – a "fascinating" insight into the day-to-day life of a professional footballer, according to England goalkeeper Joe Hart and "best mate", who wrote the book's foreword.

Hart said: "Dave Edwards has been one of my best mates in football, all the way through my career and this book offers some great behind-the-scenes insight into what it is like for a player at a major tournament, and some of the secrets behind Wales' spectacular success."

The book, written with the help of Wolves' head of media Paul Berry, is set to be released this month. It has been published by St Davids Press, www.st-davids-press.wales

Berry said it was a privilege to work with Edwards.

"Like so many football fans, I thought the story of Wales at Euro 2016, their first major tournament for 58 years, was a fantastic one to follow," he said.

"It was made even more interesting having worked with Dave for so many years at Wolves, as well as Wayne Hennessey and Sam Vokes.

"All three of those players were great to work with, and the sort of characters whom you always want to be successful. The further the tournament went on, the more I thought that the idea of a book telling the behind-the-scenes story would be one which would appeal to all football fans."

After Edwards returned from France, over a spell of about six months, him and Paul had regular conversations at the training ground to put together an account of life at Euro 2016.

This included chats about the rest of his career leading up to the tournament, including his recovery from the injury which for a time put his participation in doubt.

Foundation

He added: "Dave is one of those footballers who is always very interesting and thoughtful with his opinions, and is always happy to front up and face the media and supporters through the good times and the bad.

"He had also kept a journal during the tournament, which provided a really good foundation for that section of the book.

"For me it was a privilege to listen to Dave talk so openly and honestly about life as a professional footballer, and that journey through so many ups and downs to turning out on the biggest stage of all at the European Championships.

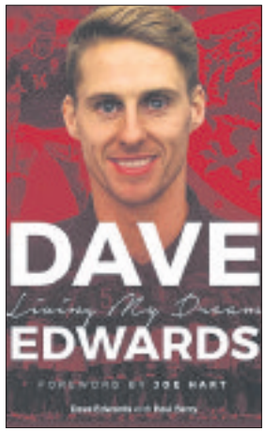
"Along with the behind-the-scenes account of what it was like for the Welsh squad at Euro 2016, there are several chapters devoted to Dave's club career with both Shrewsbury and Wolves, and hopefully plenty of stories which fans will enjoy reading.

"It was a fascinating insight into the life of someone whom, by his own admission, made the absolute most out of the talent at his disposal and has, as the title suggests, lived his dream!"

SPORTING FEATURE

By Tom Oakley

"Dave is always very interesting and thoughtful with his opinions, and is always happy to front up and face the media and supporters through the good times and the bad."



The Living the Dream book

Dave as a football-mad schoolboy

Sport

Living the dream! Dave's career brought to book

Page 39

Glassboys on the road for Trophy clash

STOURBRIDGE travel to Leamington for the FA Trophy First Round proper on Saturday – and are looking to put on a coach for supporters.

The coach will run from the War Memorial Ground at 12.30pm, subject to demand. Seats can be booked by contacting Jim McComish on 07966 568767 (after 5pm on weekdays). Fare is £10, or a £5 for under 16s £5. Bookings must be made by 6pm today (Thursday).

Saturday's league game with Farsley Celtic was called off due to the weather conditions. Meanwhile, club bosses have created a special DVD from last season's FA Cup run – just in time for Christmas.

In a memorable campaign, the Glassboys beat Peterborough Sports, Mickleover Sports, Ilkeston, Nantwich and Whitehawk to make it through to the second round for the fourth time in six seasons.

A packed War Memorial Ground saw Stourbridge overcame League One side Northampton Town thanks to a late Jack Duggan goal – sending them through to the third round for the first time in the club's history.

Dan Scarr's goal at League Two Wycombe put Glassboys on level terms before a late Adebayo Akinfenwa header broke Stour hearts and denied and denied Gary Hackett's men a replay.

Fans can now relive the two historic fixtures against Northampton and Wycombe with both games, in full, featuring on the DVD, put together by Black Country Video and priced at £9.95. The DVDs are in stock now at the club shop.

Dan's the man to have an extended stay at Chairboys

FORMER Stourbridge player Dan Scarr will spend the rest of the season on loan at Wycombe Wanderers from Birmingham City.

The 22-year-old defender joined Blues in January after impressing during the Glassboys' run to the FA Cup third round last term – scoring in a 2-1 loss at Adams Park.

He joined The Chairboys on loan in August and, after 13 appearances for Gareth Ainsworth's side, has impressed enough to see his stay there extended.

The boyhood Blues fan is yet to play a first team game at St Andrew's, but he was a regular for their under-23s before joining Wamderers. "We are delighted to have extended Dan's loan with us until the end of the season," said Ainsworth.

"He has proved himself to be an important member of our squad and having him as part of our plans for the second half of the season will give us a big boost for the run-in.

"He's a player with a lot of ability and a fantastic attitude. This loan will continue to be a great step for him in terms of his development."

Winning points are earned the hard way

STOURBRIDGE Chess Club faced Greenlands in Worcestershire Division 2 and looked the better side. Jeremy Humphries was first to finish with a win, but this was followed by a loss on board 1.

Meanwhile, Julie Wilson had a poor position and was a piece for a pawn down on board 2. Sam Bradley was a pawn up with the bishop pair but the position was blocked and his opponent had some counter-play.

Joe Bombardini looked in trouble, but he played the ending better than his opponent and Stourbridge led 2-1. Bradley was still ahead by a pawn but the game remained finely balanced. Wilson, though, got out of jail, won the game and won the match. So with the match decided Bradley shook hands on a draw. Stourbridge had made hard work of it, but had the two points.

Monday's more important match was the Wolverhampton Division 2 clash between the B team and promotion dark horses Boldmere.

The A team had scraped a draw there earlier this season and Boldmere were weaker for their return trip. SCC's B team are decent and Eric Horwill had an early draw. Richard Wilkinson entered a same colour bishop ending with at least five pawns each, but he had about 50 minutes more than his opponent. He pushed for the win but had to accept a draw. Colin Woodall also got a draw on board 6, followed by a loss on board 2. It was all down to Martin Berridge against Arthur Kent and John Foxall who was black against Tony Hickey and outgraded by about 30 points.

Both won, meaning a great win for the B team that could see them aim for a top half finish. The A team may have one less promotion challenger to worry about.

BYFIELD LOOKS TO FIND FEET

SUPER featherweight Les Byfield is finding his quick feet once more as he targets an eighth consecutive professional boxing victory.

Byfield takes on former sparring partner Andy Harris at Walsall FC's Stadium Suite on Sunday and has been putting in extra training to bring back his lightning-quick feet he was so well known for on the amateur scene.

The 30-year-old from Netherton, fights Harris in his first six-round bout as part of BCB Promotions' 'Jingle All The Way' event. Byfield knows what a tough customer 'Thunder' is from their hours of sparring and hopes his high work-rate will carry him through all six rounds.

"Since I have turned pro I have slowed my feet down a lot and I have been working really hard in my sessions to try and speed them back up," said Byfield. "Before I went pro, one of my biggest attributes was that I had really fast feet so I have been working a lot to try and get those back.

Heavier

"This will be my first six-rounder so it will be my aim to last the six rounds with Andy. With him being a little bit heavier than me I am guessing it will go the distance," he said.

"I know Andy is a very good boxer and I sparred with him when I first went pro so I am expecting this to be a very tough fight."

Jingle All The Way also features Walsall's Rachel Ball who makes her professional boxing debut at the top of the bill. The Aldridge featherweight turns over from kickboxing where she achieved world honours. She is joined by Birmingham welterweight Kane Baker and Ledbury super lightweight Alex Florence.

Standard tickets for Jingle All The Way, are £35 and VIP tickets at £60 for tables of 10, with a hot Christmas buffet. They are available by calling the boxers or Walsall FC box office on 01922 651414/416.

Thrown up on opposite sides

Tipton's Scott Baker is making his debut in the BDO world darts championship

TIPTON duo Scott Baker and Jamie Hughes have landed on opposite sides of the draw for the 2018 BDO World Championship.

The Black Country throwers can't toe the oche together until, at least, the semi-finals at Lakeside. The BDO tournament will take place in Frimley Green from January 6-14, live on Channel Four and BT Sport.

Debutant Baker will be up against Belgium's Andy Beatens in a first-to-three sets tie in round one. Third seed Hughes, a two-time semi-finalist, will be eyeing up a potential last four rematch with holder Glen Durrant, who beat him at the same stage last time. Yozza's first opponent will be the winner of the preliminary round tie between Canada's David Cameron and German Open qualifier Michael Unterbuchner.

Meanwhile, Hughes reached the semi-finals of the BDO Finder Masters last weekend.

At the Hotel Zuiderduin in Egmond aan Zee, Holland, Hughes beat both Dutchman Wouter Vaes and Dean Reynolds 5-1 in Group F.

In a best-of-five format, he then beat Wesley Harms 3-0 but lost in a decider to Jim Williams, who then lost to Danny Noppert.

Montserrat international joins Exodus

THERE is an Exodus at Halesowen Town – but without any players leaving.

The Yeltz have strengthened their back line with the signing of 6ft 5ins ex-Glassboy Exodus Geohaghon.

Geohaghon, who spent time in his youth at West Bromwich Albion, has Football League experience with Peterbrough United, as well as with loan spells at Rotherham United, Shrewsbury Town and Port Vale.

Outside the League, he has played for Sutton Coldfield, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Kettering, as well as Barnet, Darlington, Dagenham & Redbridge and Mansfield Town, where he won the Conference title in 2012. The much-travelled player has been at Worcester City, Braintree, Solihull Moors and Nuneaton Town, later representing Whitehawk, Stourbridge, Torquay United and Nuneaton Town as a player-coach.

Also signing on is Montserrat international striker Spencer Weir-Daley, who has scored 13 times in 21 games for Redditch United this season.

Starting his career at Nottingham Forest, the 32-year-old has also played for Notts County, AFC Telford, Boston United, Corby Town, Kettering Town and Hednesford Town before signing for Redditch in July 2017. He has played twice for Montserrat and has made 350-plus appearances in all, scoring more than 140 goals.

Saturday's game against Nantwich Town was called off and has yet to be rearranged.

England u-19s call for cricketer Finch

STOURBRIDGE cricketer Adam Finch has been selected for England's squad for the Under-19 World Cup which starts in New Zealand next month.

Finch, aged 17, is one of the youngest players in the squad and will be joined by Worcestershire team-mate Dillon Pennington. Also included is Warwickshire opener Liam Banks.

Warwickshire's former England batsman Jonathan Trott will be England's batting coach for the tournament.

He said: "I enjoyed working with the Lions and am looking forward to getting out there for the u-19s World Cup and helping the guys to hopefully to do well."

★★★

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